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A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

NAVAL ACTIONS

OF THE

LAST WAR, &c.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIX-PENCE.

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

NAVAL ACTIONS

OF THE

LAST WAR;

IN ORDER TO PROVE

THAT THE FRENCH NATION NEVER GAVE SUCH SLENDER PROOFS OF MARITIME GREATNESS AS DURING THAT PERIOD;

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DISCIPLINE,

AND

HINTS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT,

OF THE

BRITISH NAVY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

BY AN OFFICER.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

IN order to diſpel a notion extremely prejudicial to the honour of this country, that the French have not only equalled, but ſurpaſſed us as a maritime nation, whether in manœuvering, ſailing, or fighting a fleet, I have taken up the pen. The idea has no doubt been zealouſly propagated by our induſtrious natural enemies, who well know, that if ſuch an opinion were once generally embraced, it would produce the very effects they wiſh to flow from it. Permit the French to have the REPUTATION of ſuperior genius, courage, and abilities, and you immediately damp the ſpirits of our officers and ſeamen; who, in that caſe, would not plough the ocean,

as they have done, in queſt of the enemy, with elated courage, and *in confidence of victory*; would not boldly attack, but timidly *defend*; and be ſatisfied, if, inſtead of ſtriking the flags of their adverſaries, they themſelves eſcaped being captured.

Deſpondence is pernicious to the aggrandiſement of any nation; and ſhould be held in particular deteſtation in this iſland, where a humid atmoſphere depreſſes the animal ſpirits, and naturally encourages it. Upon the leaſt failure of ſucceſs, men, otherwiſe of good ſenſe and courage, indulge too much in gloomy apprehenſions for the fate of their country. They thus aid the evil they ſhould remedy; and do not conſider, that temporary, or occaſional diſaſters, are common to all nations; and that, to counteract or overcome them, confidence in their reſources, and firmneſs and ardour in combat, are abſolutely requiſite. Under every misfortune, the Romans

mans remained firm and undaunted; and to this fortitude, as much as to their valour, were they indebted for their conquests.

That the notion, or opinion, which I have mentioned, in favour of the French, and degrading to England, foolishly prevailed during last war, no person in the recollection of the period will be hardy enough to deny. I have made it my business to shew, from facts, how unfounded it was; and to prove, that at no æra whatever did they exhibit so little prowess to boast of.

If I am able to establish this point, the consequences may prove beneficial to my country. For, instead of harbouring, in future, unmanly notions of ourselves, it will serve to illustrate, that unanimity, and good conduct, are all that are necessary to render Great Britain flourishing, and triumphant, over the world.

Respecting

Reſpecting the compoſition of the following pages, I confeſs it to be very faulty; and, without reſerve, I abandon it to the critics. If, however, when they condemn my violation of the rules of grammar, they give me credit for the motives that prompted the publication, *viz.* a deſire to do honour to my country, and to remove a popular error, unpropitious to her glory, I ſhall remain ſatisfied.

THE AUTHOR.

A SHORT

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

NAVAL ACTIONS

OF THE

LAST WAR, &c.

THERE ſeems to be an opinion (and that but too general) prevailing, that our fleets are not what they were formerly; and that the naval power of France has equalled, if not ſurpaſſed, that of Great Britain.

Without inquiring whence this error originates—for an egregious error it certainly is—from what quarter propagated, the ſort of people it is favoured by;

or whether it proceeds from ignorance, or miſchief; let us examine how well the gentlemen who favour this opinion are founded in their aſſertions.

It is acknowledged, I believe, that the beſt way to arrive at truth is by inveſtigating facts, from authentic evidence.—I ſhall therefore, in the firſt place, ſet out with aſſerting, in direct oppoſition to what theſe gentlemen advance, 'That at no time ſince Great Britain was 'a maritime power, has ſhe had ſuch 'ſolid reaſons to be ſatisfied with her 'naval proweſs and ſuperiority, as from 'the events of laſt war.'—I am far from being averſe to the going into the proof of what I advance, or aſhamed of comparing the actions of laſt war with thoſe of the war which preceded it, or any the moſt glorious war that is upon record, and whoſe brilliant naval actions grace the annals of this nation.

Let

Let us then, firſt, recollect how the laſt war commenced with the French, and what, in all probability, was the grand object of that nation. Is it imagined that it was the diſmemberment of America from this empire? Can the wiſeſt, the ableſt politician in the world, pretend to have foreſeen, that America would atchieve (aſſiſted as ſhe was) her independance * ? It was never imagined, their moſt ſanguine enthuſiaſts in the cauſe never expected, that in ſo ſhort a time it could have happened. But there aroſe out of this cruel and unnatural war, an object which our natural enemy could not be otherwiſe than tempted to look at. The proſpect was more alluring, more flattering to their am-

* I believe four men in five are of opinion, that, had the Britiſh army in America (the fineſt troops, for their numbers, that ever were brought into the field) been commanded by a Duke of Brunſwick, the *burthen*, with the glory of American dependance, would have been ſecured to Great Britain,

bitious views, than any that had been preſented to them ſince the two nations had been rivals. I will therefore aſk, if there can be any doubt, but that the deſtruction of our navy was their grand aim? Conſidering that their chief attention had been directed to their own navy during the peace; that there was a proſpect (though it proved deluſive) that we ſhould not be able to man all our ſhips, from being deprived of ſeamen which formerly we had drawn from the American trade; that, inſtead of the aid of theſe ſeamen, they would fight againſt us; conſidering the complexion of the times, that the nation was in a ſtate of factious ferment at home, and that the fever of party had ever tainted the diſcipline of our fleets; that the French had got to ſea before us, with a ſuperior fleet, ſanguine in their projects, preſumptuous in confidence, with a prince of the blood, to gather promiſed laurels,

and

and to ſhare expected triumphs:—upon the whole, can it be doubted for a moment, what was their grand, and always favourite object? or can we wonder, that they were ſanguine in their expectations of pulling down the bulwark of this iſland?

It is indeed almoſt needleſs to inquire, how far they have ſucceeded. It ought to be as animating to Engliſhmen, as it is humiliating and diſgraceful to our rival, to be convinced, that the war terminated without the enemy having in their poſſeſſion one ſingle line of battle ſhip taken from the Britiſh fleet; whilſt every harbour in England is adorned with the floating caſtles of our enemy. Twenty ſail of the line were captured in the courſe of the war, with a greater number of large frigates than was ever taken in any former war. And though we were unfortunate in loſing ſome ſhips by ſtorms and hurricanes, parti-

cularly the Ville de Paris, which had been borne into the harbour of Jamaica in glorious triumph, and afterwards graced an Engliſh line of battle; yet theſe unfortunate events do not diminiſh the luſtre of our conqueſts. But let us as conciſely as poſſible examine this naval war.

The firſt blood drawn, was in a ſevere action between the Arethuſa, commanded by Captain Samuel Marſhal, and the French frigate La Belle Poule. The greateſt gallantry was evinced on both ſides. The Engliſh frigate was inferior in ſize, number of men, and weight of metal; yet, if we were to judge from the difference in the liſt of killed and wounded, being more than five to one in favour of the Engliſh frigate, ſuperior proweſs was evident.

Soon after this action, we ſhall find upon record the ever memorable 27th of July, 1778, diſgraceful to both nations—but certainly

tainly moſt ſo to the French ; and infinitely more diſcouraging, and at this period mortifying and humiliating, if they will allow us to believe, that they expected nothing leſs than that the firſt eſſay of their grand fleet would be crowned with decided victory. However artfully they have concealed their feelings; however they might endeavour to impoſe upon the eyes of Europe a fallacious account of the battle, they could not deceive their own officers and ſeamen who returned to that harbour of Breſt, from which they had ſailed a few days before with a confident ſpirit, cheriſhed to that ardor and madneſs for battle, which Frenchmen are acknowledged to poſſeſs, equal to any nation, when fighting in the preſence of their princes:— they returned, I ſay, with that depreſſion, which ardent and preſumptive ſpirits feel when mortified by diſappointment. I am ſure there is not a man who ſerved on that

day in the Britiſh fleet, who is not convinced, that if the French Admiral had not taken the advantage of the night to retreat, the Britiſh fleet would have renewed the battle the following morning. Without going further into the ſubject, which we have been already ſurfeited with, however every man in that fleet; in his own mind, is convinced that the enemy ſhould have been followed to the harbour's mouth of Breſt; ſtill I will venture to affirm, that a Britiſh ſeaman had never a more contemptible opinion of his enemy, than from the conduct of the French Admiral on the 27th and 28th of July: and ſuch an opinion, at the beginning of a war, was ſurely no immaterial circumſtance; for, notwithſtanding the action was not deciſive, there were exhibited thoſe bold and daring proofs of valour, which have ſo often confounded our enemies. Single ſhips were ſeen ruſhing into action againſt a wall

of

of fire, unſupported; they ſaw the ſignal for battle flying, and never looked behind them; one ſhip cut through their line *, which evinced that the force and proweſs of each ſhip, was ſuch as required only vigour and preſence of mind to have combined the whole, and to have conducted the fleet to certain victory.

Let us at once paſs on to the next circumſtance of great moment; which happened in the home ſeas; when we ſhall ſee (what indeed for many years England had not been accuſtomed to behold) the united fleets of France and Spain in the Britiſh Channel, commanded by the Comte d'Orvilliers and Don Cordova, of 62 ſail of the line, and our own fleet of 36 ſail, commanded by Sir Charles Hardy, retiring before it; either to draw the unwieldy fleet of the enemy into the narrow

* The Courageux, commanded by Lord Mulgrave.

part of the Channel, where it would have been expoſed to great danger, had they met with bad weather; or, what is more probable, the Britiſh Admiral did not think it prudent to hazard a battle againſt ſuch odds, when there was ſo much at ſtake. The nation, ſpoilt I may ſay by the ſucceſs of the former war, without conſidering the cauſes, went at once into a flame of diſcontent; they were ready to believe that, had it happened in the year *fifty-nine*, we ſhould have attacked and deſtroyed any fleet, whatever might have been its numbers.—But I will aſk, whether any action of that war, or any war we have ever had with the French, can juſtify ſuch preſumption? There ſeems to have been indeed a confidence of this kind in the reign of King William; for, when Tourville * with a ſuperior fleet came into

* Battle of Beachy Head. The French fleet was 60 line of battle ſhips; the Engliſh combined with the Dutch was 41.

the Channel, Lord Torrington had poſitive orders to give the enemy battle. Great Britain was in alliance at that time with the Dutch; of whoſe ſhips part of our fleet was compoſed, and who fought with an obſtinacy at that time peculiar to their character. The event of the battle was unſucceſsful; ſuperior numbers prevailed; ſeveral of the Dutch ſhips were ſunk, with two Engliſh of the line: a total overthrow was only prevented by the Engliſh Admiral judiciouſly anchoring his fleet on the tide of ebb; which ſeparated the two fleets, and ſecured him a ſafe retreat into our harbours upon the next flood tide.

This event encouraged Tourville, the following year, to attack * with 44 of his victorious ſhips the largeſt fleet that was

* The battle of La Hogue.

ever

ever commanded by an Engliſh Admiral, and, conſidering the ſize of the ſhips, the moſt formidable force that had ever been aſſembled by any nation. It conſiſted of 63 Britiſh ſhips of the line, (ſix of which were of 100 guns, bearing together 4600 men, and ten of 90 guns), with the Dutch ſquadron of 36 ſail (19 of which were firſt and ſecond rates); making in the whole a line of battle of 99 ſail. With ſuch mighty odds, can it be wondered at that the fleet of France was worſted in the firſt day's battle; or that it was purſued, and a great part of it deſtroyed in a defenceleſs bay * on the ſecond? Our wonder is more juſtly excited, that the French Admiral ſhould have had the temerity to have attacked it at

* Perhaps, if the French had had an harbour at that time at Cherbourg, they would not have loſt a ſingle ſhip. This is, perhaps, as ſtrong a circumſtance as can be produced, of what importance to that nation it will be to complete that harbour.

all;

all; and that, having once involved himſelf in battle, he ſhould have eſcaped even to have run any one of his ſhips on ſhore. But let it be obſerved, on the ſubject of this battle, though the conſequences were moſt fortunate to England, in diminiſhing the naval power of France, yet, as to the victory, I am inclined to believe, we have been, as a warlike nation, rather too vain, for we were more than two ſhips to one. And when we boaſt of the glorious *ninety-two*, we are ignorant of the circumſtances attending the action.

But to return to my ſubject, and connect with it my obſervations on theſe two battles: I take with me, I think, ſome degree of proof, that it is not ſkill or courage that can inſure ſucceſs againſt a fleet greatly ſuperior. It ſhould be remembered that, in the victories obtained in the year 1747, Admiral Anſon's fleet was 14 ſail of the line; the enemy's only 5: in the

ſame

ſame year, Admiral Hawke's fleet was 14 to 8 of the enemy: that, in our ſucceſſes in the year 1759, Admiral Boſcawen's victory was obtained over the French Admiral De la Clue, when his fleet was 14 ſail of the line, the enemy's only 7. Yet it is from a recollection of theſe ſucceſſes, when our ſhips were two to one againſt the enemy, in former wars, that it was expected, in the laſt war, that the enemy was to be attacked, and beaten, when nearly two to one againſt us *. The victory obtained by Sir

* Of the circumſtances that might be brought in proof, that the ſhips of France fought either with greater obſtinacy, or that our ſhips were not ſo formidable, in former wars, there is one that evidently ſhews it; which is, by comparing what the nation expected of the navy at the different periods. We find, in the reign of King William, that Admiral Herbert had a battle with the French fleet in Bantry Bay. The fleets were nearly equal; that is, we had 22 ſail of the line, and the enemy's line of battle was 24. There was not any ſhip taken on either ſide; but our hiſtorians

Sir Edward Hawke over Conflans, was not in conſequence of a battle. The French Admiral never attempted to try the ſtrength of his fleet, but fled before a ſhot was fired; having orders, as it is ſaid, to avoid a battle, and purſue the object for which *his* armament had been equipped, the making a deſcent in Ireland. Yet no Admiral's character has ever ſtood ſo high for intrepidity as Sir Edward Hawke's; whoſe firm heart, braving the dangers which threatened him, reſolved on the deſtruction of his country's foes, his ſpirit impelled him in the purſuit, amidſt rocks and ſhoals, on their own coaſt, on a lee-ſhore, in the month of November.

In the ſame fortunate war, we ſee the Admirals Pocock and Stevens, in the Eaſt

hiſtorians are rather inclined to admit, that we had the worſt of it. Yet Admiral Herbert was created a Viſcount, ſeveral of the Captains were knighted, and the ſeamen rewarded with a bounty of ten ſhillings each.

Indies,

Indies, with great bravery engage the French fleet commanded by Monſ. d'Aché in three ſeveral battles—no ſhips taken on either ſide: and this was the only quarter of the globe where the enemy had ſhips to contend with us. The renown we had acquired from our ſucceſſes at home, and in other quarters of the globe, had no doubt animated our fleets, and damped the ardor of the enemy. But in India, after long and bloody conteſts, we were obliged to be contented with drawn battles;—the French line of battle having a ſuperiority of two ſhips*. And theſe circumſtances continue the proof, that the intoxicating ſucceſſes of that popular war, do not juſtify us in the ſobriety of reflection

* In the firſt and ſecond action with Monſieur d'Aché, it appears we had a line of battle ſhip more than the enemy, and that they brought two ſhips of 44 guns and a frigate into the line:

Engliſh

tion to believe, that we may always riſque a battle when the enemy is ſo greatly ſuperior in numbers as the combined fleets were, commanded by Comte d'Orvilliers

English Line of Battle.

	Guns	Captains
Tyger	60	Thomas Latham
Salisbury	50	John Somerſett
Elizabeth	64	Commodore Stevens / Captain Kempelfelt
Yarmouth	66	Admiral Pocock / John Harriſon
Cumberland	56	William Brereton
Newcaſtle	50	Grey Legge
Weymouth	60	Nicholas Vincent

French Line of Battle.

	Guns	Captains
Bien Aime	58	Monſ. de la Palliere
Vengeur	54	Monſ. Bouvett
Conde	44	Monſ. de Roſbau
Duc d'Orleans	50	Monſ. de Surville
Zodiaque	74	Com. d'Ache / Chev. de Monteill
Saint Louis	50	Monſ. Joannis
Moras	44	Monſ. Bec de Lievre
Sylphide	36	Monſ. Mahe
Duc de Bourgogne	56	Monſ. Apret

Ships in the laſt action of Admiral Pocock's with Monſieur d'Aché, which appears, from the number of men killed and wounded, to have been very obſtinate.

Engliſh Line.

	Guns	Captains	Killed and Wound.
Elizabeth	64	Richard Tiddeman	77
Newcaſtle	50	Captain Michie	112
Tyger	60	William Brereton	168
Grafton	68	Rear Admiral Stevens / Richard Kempelfelt	83
Yarmouth	66	Vice Admiral Pocock / John Harriſon	39
Cumberland	56	John Somerſett	52
Salisbury	50	Digby Dent	36
Sunderland	50	James Colville	2
Weymouth	60	Sir William Burd	0

French Line.

	Guns	
Actif	64	Commanders names not known.
Minotaur	74	
Duc d'Orleans	60	
Saint Louis	50	
Vengeur	64	
Zodiaque	74	
Comte de Provence	74	
Duc de Bourgogne	56	
Illuſtre	64	
Fortune	60	
Centaur	64	

and Don Cordova, which had ventured, we may ſay, into the narrow ſeas; for their conduct evinces that it was nothing more than a venture. We can ſcarcely call it inſulting our coaſt; for, except giving the panic to ſome old Weſt Country women of *both ſexes*, they were perfectly harmleſs. I ſhould believe, that there can be no greater proof of the imbecility of the French councils, or the timidity of their Admirals, than the inoffenſive uſe they made of this wonderful armament—which ſimply ſailed up the Channel, and then ſailed back again. It did not appear by this manœuvre, that we were at all diſcouraged in our future projects; for the intrepid ſpirit of our ſeamen, under the command of the fortunate Sir George Rodney, ſoon blazed forth and was crowned with ſucceſs, by the capture of ſeveral Spaniſh line of battle ſhips; and the liſt of the priſoners taken was graced by the name of their Admiral

Don Langara. Our fleet was ſuperior; but the wind blowing ſtrong upon the ſhore, and the weather hazy, made the purſuit and attack exceedingly hazardous. But ſuch was the ardor of our commanders, that it appears the enemy's fleet was beaten, and taken, before they had conſidered the riſque they had run; for the following day many of them were in danger of being driven in the enemy's port of Cadiz. The defence that the Spaniards made rather evinced obſtinacy than ſkill, ſo that our ſhips received very little damage.

About this time an action between two ſingle ſhips materially claims our notice; the Quebec frigate of 32 guns, nine and ſix pounders, commanded by Captain Farmer, and the Surveillant of 36 guns, fourteen and ſix pounders, commanded by Monſieur Coudie. The action was gallantly maintained on both ſides, until

the maſts of the French frigate came by the board, and ſhe was ſilenced, and on the point of ſurrendering; at this critical moment the fore-maſt of the Quebec fell aft upon the quarter-deck; and the guns firing at the ſame time, the ſails caught fire in an inſtant. The flames ſpread ſo rapidly, that the ſhip was preſently in a blaze, fore and aft; the main and mizen maſt came alſo by the board. The enemy, encouraged by the accident, returned to their quarters, and increaſed the confuſion. All attempts to extinguiſh the fire were vain: the ſhip burnt to the water's edge, and blew up with her gallant commander, colours flying, unconquered.—Many of the officers and ſeamen ſwam to the enemy's ſhip, where they were received with that humanity which is ſo often to be found with heroic qualities; yet the utmoſt precaution was neceſſary in receiving them on board, ſuch was the deplorable

deplorable ſtate of the French frigate, in a ſinking condition, and the decks filled with mangled and dead bodies.

Whilſt the heart expands with admiration at this animating example, which, even in the midſt of horror, kindles a ſpirit of emulation, let us not forget an action which does the nation equal credit. Capt. Richard Pearſon, commanding the Serapis of 44 guns, having with him an armed ſhip of 20 guns, commanded by Captain Piercy, by the moſt intrepid gallantry and perſeverance, ſaved a valuable convoy of rich ſhips from the Baltic. The enemy were greatly ſuperior, conſiſting of the Bon Homme Richard of 44 guns, and two large frigates of 36, with a brig of 16 commanded by Paul Jones, a deſperate Engliſh outlaw. The battle raged furiouſly for a length of time; the Serapis lying along-ſide and on board the Bon Homme Richard, whilſt one of the

French frigates raked the Serapis fore and aft by repeated broadſides. This unequal conteſt was heroically maintained until the convoy were all in ſafety; and the main maſt of the Serapis falling, ſhe was obliged to ſurrender to the ſhip ſhe had demoliſhed; the deſperado Jones being under the neceſſity of quitting his ſhattered ſinking ſhip, and removing the remains of his crew to the Serapis. The merit of this action ariſes from the little probability there was of conquering. The apparent object with the Britiſh officers ſeems to have been that of riſquing their lives, until the trading wealth of this country was in ſafety; and it ſhould not be forgotten, that the enemy loſt a ſhip of equal force in the conteſt.

Let us now carry our inveſtigation to the Weſt Indies, and obſerve what happened there, to evince this ſo much talked of improved ſpirit of bravery in our enemy.

my. There we find Admiral Barrington, at the Cul de Sac at St. Lucia, December 23, 1778, with 7 ſail of ſhips, moſt of them of 50 guns, reſiſt the attack of 12 ſail of heavy ſhips of the line commanded by Comte d'Eſtaing, and ſecure the conqueſt of that iſland; though there is not the ſmalleſt doubt, had the French Admiral employed only half the good conduct and determined bravery in his attack, that was evinced by the Britiſh Admiral in the defence of the little Engliſh ſquadron, the latter would have been deſtroyed, and the iſland of St. Lucia ſecured to France. Yet the French pride themſelves upon the daring qualities of this officer. But nothing can ſo much prove the difference there is in the character of the two nations, as the ſatisfaction the French have ſhewn at the merely vapouring conduct of ſome of their Admirals. Let us examine if Monſ. d'Eſtaing acquitted himſelf

better at the battle of the Grenades, the 8th of July 1779, when Admiral Byron, joined by Admiral Barrington, attacked the enemy's ſuperior fleet. The Britiſh Admiral, it ſeems, had been deceived, either by ignorant or treacherous intelligence, which deſcribed the enemy's fleet to be much inferior; ſo that, inſtead of combining his whole force in a line of battle, he made the ſignal to chace, and engage as the ſhips came up with the enemy. Admiral *Barrington* in the Prince of Wales, Captains *Sawyer* in the Boyne, and *Gardner* in the Sultan, were the firſt up with the enemy; being followed by the Lion, Captain *Cornwallis*, the Grafton, Captain *Collingwood*, Monmouth, Captain *Fanſhaw*, and the Cornwall, Captain *Edwards*. Theſe officers, though they found the enemy greatly ſuperior, did not heſitate to attack, and performed prodigies of valour—reſiſting the

the whole French fleet until the reſt of our ſhips drew up. And then, notwithſtanding thoſe which had firſt engaged were greatly diſabled, and the Lion ſeparated by the enemy's line from our fleet; yet it would ſeem, that the boldneſs of the ſhips which had engaged effected ſuch an impreſſion, that the French Admiral was diſpoſed to act entirely on the defenſive; not even moleſting the ſhips which were already cut off, and two others, the Grafton and Cornwall, which muſt have fallen with but moderate exertions.

Let us continue in theſe ſeas, and view the conduct of the enemy's Admiral, Comte de Guichen, who was met by an inferior fleet, commanded by Sir George Rodney, the 19th of May, 1780, to leeward of Martinique. Here the Britiſh fleet was ſeparated, and thrown into confuſion, by the ſignals of the Admiral not being clearly comprehended; yet the enemy were ſo roughly

roughly handled, that they ſought a port; and in two actions afterwards convinced us, that they wiſhed rather to avoid a battle than fight it out.—In this place I ſhall take occaſion to ſpeak of an old officer, whoſe character was threatened by a letter *, which appeared in the public papers, from Sir George Rodney to him. Captain Carkett had diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the preceding war, and Sir George Rodney had appointed him in this battle to lead the Britiſh fleet. This veteran had the old Fighting Inſtructions imprinted on his mind. Sir George Rodney had made additions to theſe Inſtructions. He had ſignals which announced, that it was his intention to attack either the van, centre, or rear. He had made one of

* A letter from Sir George Rodney to Captain Carkett, purporting that, as he diſapproved of his conduct on the day of battle, though he believed him to be a brave man, he had appointed another Captain to lead the Britiſh fleet under his command.

theſe

theſe ſignals on this 19th of May; but after the ſignal had been made, the fleet had changed tacks, occaſioned by the manœuvres of the enemy. The Fighting Inſtructions expreſsly ſay, that, when in a line of battle oppoſed to the enemy, the van ſhip is to ſteer with the ſhip of the enemy's van, and each ſhip is to engage his opponent in the enemy's line of battle. On this day Sir George Rodney, after ſeveral manœuvres, made the ſignal for his fleet to bear down and engage—every ſhip his opponent. The van of the enemy, it ſeems, at this time was far extended a-head of our van; and Captain Carkett thought it his duty to ſtretch a-head, and engage the van ſhip, agreeably to the old Fighting Inſtructions impreſſed on his mind. The ſhips in the van diviſion, and part of the centre, followed him; which ſeparated them from the centre. Each man thought he was doing his duty. And

I muſt

I muſt obſerve, that it required more gallantry in Captain Carkett's perſevering to engage the van ſhip, receiving the fire of other ſhips as he paſſed, than to have bore down, and to have engaged the ſhip that happened to be, at the time the ſignal was made, oppoſed to him. Though it undoubtedly was the intention of Sir George Rodney, as the French line was extended, to have made an impreſſion on the centre with his whole force.—I will not preſume to ſay, that there was a want of preciſion in the Admiral's ſignals; but certain it is, that the language of ſignals, eſpecially that which innovates upon eſtabliſhed principles, ſhould be not only perfectly clear in its meaning, but well marked by points of time. Be it as it will, if there was any advantage to be taken of theſe miſtakes, it is evident that the enemy had not the courage, or ſkill, to attempt it.

Let

Let us continue in theſe ſeas, and remark upon what happened, when Sir Samuel Hood was ſent with a reinforcement of five ſail of the line to join Sir George Rodney. The ſurpriſe and capture of the iſland of St. Euſtatius, as a military achievement, is not worth notice *, nor has it added one ſingle

* The taking poſſeſſion of St. Euſtatius was certainly a great object, as it ſometimes happened, that the French had no other means of being ſupplied, either with proviſions or naval ſtores, than from the magazines of this iſland; and, to the eternal diſgrace of Commerce, it was diſcovered that many Engliſh merchants were concerned in this traffic, ſacrificing the intereſts of their country to their own ſelfiſh views. People who play ſo deſperate a game deſerve every misfortune that can befal them; and they of all others ſhould have had the leaſt claim to conſideration, when the property and ſtores of the merchants were ſeized by the Commanders in Chief. The Britiſh ſailors, who were protecting their country, and who in the line of battle ſhips received nothing but hard blows, (and but for whoſe bravery, on the 12th of April, no one can ſay that, with any degree of ſafety to Great Britain, the war would have been brought to an iſſue), were graciouſly promiſed the

ſingle leaf to the laurels of the Commanders in Chief. There being only thirty invalids to defend it againſt a fleet of 14 ſail of the line and 1500 troops, approaching with as much caution as if there had been to be ſurpriſed a ſtrong garriſon, time was loſt by uſeleſs feints and preparations. Inſtead of the fleet proceeding immediately, it was brought to the leeward of Martinique—as it was ſaid, to create an alarm there; whilſt Sir Samuel Hood was diſpatched with five ſail of the line to wait for the fleet off the iſland of Nevis, and to prevent intelligence being ſent to St. Euſtatius. By this delay, the Dutch Ad-

the plunder of this iſland—of this neſt of commercial traitors. Inſtead, however, of its being ſecured to them by the Courts of Law, the claimants met with ſuch encouragement from the decrees in their favour, that many have proſecuted for property ſeized at St. Euſtatius, who never had a ſix-pence upon the iſland; the Civilian and the claimant making a job of it, ſecure in a decree of reſtitution, to the ruin of the captors.

miral

miral ſailed with the convoy from the road; though, *by good fortune*, the whole were afterwards captured.

Soon after the reduction of the iſland, Sir Samuel Hood was ſent with his ſquadron of 17 ſail of the line, to cruiſe to the leeward of Martinique; and, on the 28th of April, 1781, he deſcried the enemy's fleet, of 20 ſail of the line, commanded by Comte de Graſſe, ſteering round the Diamond Rock: theſe were ſoon joined by four men of war from Port Royal—making in the whole 24 ſail of the line. The Britiſh Admiral, undaunted by their ſuperior numbers and the weight of their ſhips, inſtantly drew his ſquadron into a cloſe line, and offered the enemy battle; which, however, was cautiouſly accepted by the French Admiral, who, having the weather gage, had it always in his power to chooſe his diſtance. But he kept aloof, and fired

only

only at ſuch a diſtance as evidently ſhewed he had no intention to fight the battle out, but that his deſign was to amuſe and diſable our ſhips. Sir Samuel made many judicious evolutions, to gain the wind and cloſe with the enemy; and, after perſevering for ſeveral days to no purpoſe, (and one of his ſhips being unable to keep the line), he was permitted to join Sir George Rodney, who was lying at this time at St. Euſtatius, with the Sandwich, Triumph, and Panther.

When we obſerve, that it was in the power of the French Admiral, for three days, to bear down, to cloſe with, and engage the Britiſh fleet, ſo much inferior in force, who can heſitate to determine, that ſuch conduct does not give us room to believe, that our natural enemy has improved either in naval ſkill or courage? But, if we compare this action

action with the battles fought by Tourville (either his firſt, when our fleet, commanded by Lord Torrington, was defeated, or with the ſecond off La Hogue, when he bore down with 44 ſhips of the line to attack 99. and fought a whole day without loſing a ſhip), or with the wonders performed by the Counts Fourbin and Du Guay Trouin *, we may reaſonably conclude, that, notwithſtanding the number of their ſhips, the great maritime requiſites have been upon the decline.

Let us now go back, and examine how well the enemy has ſuſtained this pretended character of improvement in North

* In the Memoirs of the Counts Fourbin and Du Guay Trouin, their exploits are certainly overtold, with great miſtakes. Yet the trade of England never ſuffered ſo much as from the activity and intrepidity of theſe Dunkirk heroes; and it is ſurely a diſgraceful circumſtance to the boaſted glorious reign of Queen Anne, that not only our merchants were ruined, but ſeveral ſhips of the line of 80 and 70 guns were taken by theſe adventurers.

America. Here we meet again our inveterate and diſhonourable * enemy, D'Eſtaing, who appeared off the Bar of New York with 12 ſail of the line of two decks, whilſt his adverſary, Lord Howe, commanded within the Bar ſix ſail of ſhips of 64 guns, three of 50, and two of 44. The French Admiral's conduct, for ſeveral days, threatened to paſs the Bar, and attack the Britiſh ſquadron. The temptation was certainly great; the prize was worth contending for: for, if the enterpriſe had been crowned with ſucceſs, not only the men of war, with all the tranſports and victuallers, muſt have fallen into his hands, but the moſt fatal blow would have been given to all our operations in that part of the globe. The Count's reſolution, however, appears to have failed him, at the inſtant that

* Comte d'Eſtaing broke his parole of honour when a priſoner.

Fortune

Fortune ſeemed peculiarly to have favoured him with a fair wind, and a higher tide upon the Bar for his great ſhips, than had almoſt been ever remembered. The opportunity was loſt. Prudence, or a ſort of circumſpection which does not deſerve the name, brought the French Admiral to pauſe upon his deſign. Perhaps the reputation of the Britiſh Admiral, his known, determined, cool-blooded courage, the judicious arrangement of his ſhips, the animation of the Britiſh crews, which had been ſtrengthened by a thouſand volunteers from the merchant ſhips; all theſe circumſtances, and the recollection that there was no retreating if he failed, were, it may be preſumed, magnified in the mind of Comte d'Eſtaing, and overſet at once the boldneſs of his projects.

Does the Count make a more reſpectable figure at Rhode Iſland, when he

came out with a greatly ſuperior fleet to attack that commanded by Lord Howe? Does he dart upon it with the confidence of ſuperiority? Does he attempt to bring his adverſary to action by his beſt ſailing ſhips, which (from his fleet being ſo greatly ſuperior) he ought to have done, and which a Britiſh Admiral, ſo circumſtanced, would moſt certainly have done? or, Does he come on with the ſlow and cautious advance of a line of battle, until his adverſary takes from him the advantage of the weather-gage? We are too well convinced of the latter, to have any great opinion of this French Admiral's conduct; and that, by his dilatory manœuvres, the weather at length deprived him of thoſe advantages he could only have had from his great ſuperiority of force. And I believe I ſhall not be thought preſumptuous in ſaying ſo, when it is recollected, that ſoon after

after the ſtorm which ſcattered the two fleets, one of the French ſhips (Le Céſar) of 74 guns, fell in with the Iſis, a 50 gun ſhip, which ſhe attacked, apparently contemning her force. Here we ſee all the wonders that may be performed by a well commanded, well appointed, and well diſciplined Britiſh ſhip of war; and of which, indeed, I cannot find any thing that bears a compariſon, or reſemblance, in any of the actions of former wars. The two ſhips were alone. The French ſhip outſailed the Iſis: yet the ſkill of Captain Rayner, his ſeaman-like and judicious manœuvres, in taking thoſe advantageous poſitions which confounded his adverſary, the punctual obedience of his officers and crew to his orders, trained to a degree of perfection in the management of the ſails, as well as the exerciſe of the guns, conſpired, more, perhaps,

haps, than their undaunted courage, to defeat a ſhip of 74 guns and 800 men, by one of 50 guns and 350 men *. The enemy's ſhip was actually beaten, and eſcaped only by ſuperior ſailing. I believe I have no occaſion to aſk, if this is a circumſtance which proves *equal* ſkill and bravery in our enemy in the laſt war?

Though our ſhips individually were in better order, and in higher condition of health and good training for battle, than they had ever been at any former period; yet I would not undertake to defend at all times the conduct of the Admirals who were entruſted to command them. It has been ſaid, that there are heaven-born Generals. If ſo, it is a ſort of profaneneſs not to employ them; it is preſumption, and flying in the face of Heaven, to en-

* The Iſis had only two men killed.

truſt

truſt thoſe with the command of our armies at ſea, who have never been ſucceſsful. We have no occaſion to inveſtigate the arcana of Deſtiny; but to be ſatisfied, as the greateſt nations have been before us, that it is the wiſeſt and beſt policy to honour, encourage, and employ thoſe Generals who have ever been fortunate. But I proceed to continue my obſervations on the ſuppoſed active and gallant conduct of our enemy.

Do the French claim any credit from the conduct of their Admiral Monſieur Deſtouches Treville, who engaged the Admirals Arbuthnot and Graves off the Capes of Virginia? Though *we* have not much to be proud of in this battle, except in the gallant conduct of the particular ſhips which were engaged, eſpecially the Robuſt, commanded by Captain Croſby; yet the French Admiral's conduct evinced that he was worſted, becauſe he aban-

doned the apparent object for which he had riſqued a battle, of entring the Capes of Virginia, in order to co-operate with the Americans.

And what is there in the conduct of Monſ. de Graſſe, when he left his anchors off the Capes of Virginia, in Lynn-Haven-Bay, to attack the fleet commanded by Admiral Graves, that is not equivocal; except it is admitted, that a French fleet, greatly ſuperior, is entitled to credit for merely hazarding an onſet, and that their object is never to fight a battle out? It was evidently in the power of the French Admiral, Comte de Graſſe, to renew the action for ſeveral days. It is a fact that he avoided it, and returned to his ſtation in Lynn-Haven-Bay. It has been often ſaid, in the courſe of the laſt war, that when the French had any object in view, they did not ſuffer themſelves to be materially diverted from it. But

this

this cautious ſyſtem does not correſpond with the French character, as it is deſcribed to us, of impatient ardour and impetuoſity. Heroes, it is certain, are tempted by the immediate occaſion and opportunity which offer; and except the French officers, during the laſt war, were impreſſed with a conviction of ſuperiority in the Britiſh naval character, their ſyſtem would have been, to have attacked our fleets wherever they met them, and with a determined reſolution to have conquered, or be defeated; eſpecially when they were greatly ſuperior. But what inclines me to think, that in no war whatever Britiſh courage had ever made a greater impreſſion on the enterpriſing character of the French nation than the laſt, was their ſuffering Admiral Graves (after the battle off the Capes of Virginia, when it was found expedient to burn the Terrible of 74 guns) to go over the Bar

at

at New York. We find, on Monſ. de Graſſe's return to his anchorage within the Capes of Virginia, that he was joined by the ſquadron of Monſ. de Baras, his fleet being made with this reinforcement 33 or 34 ſhips of the line. The Britiſh fleet conſiſted only of 18 ſail. There could not have been a more inviting opportunity. It is well known, that the Bar of New York forbids an entrance to large ſhips, unleſs the wind is favourable, and at the top of high-water ſpring-tides. The Britiſh fleet arrived off the Bar, and was detained there a day or two; when only a part of it ſailed in. There was more than ſufficient time for a great fleet to have followed at leiſure; and this required leſs ſkill and reſolution than it is ſaid Comte de Graſſe poſſeſſed, to have attacked the Britiſh fleet with that proſpect of deſtroying it, which is always fair and probable, when the ſhips which attack are two to one.

Again,

Again, when our fleet returned off the Capes of Virginia, with an intention of forcing its way to York, for the relief of Lord Cornwallis, but arrived too late, the Engliſh garriſon having previouſly ſurrendered; fluſhed as we may ſuppoſe the French Admiral to have been with their conqueſt, with a mighty fleet of ſhips, with the temptation of deſtroying an army * which had been embarked on board of it for the relief of Lord Cornwallis; the enemy remained merely ſpectators of this little Engliſh fleet, which had come to attack them, to brave them, and in fact did really bully them.

Let us now traverſe the ſeas, and notice what during this period happened at home. Here at once it appears, that there was exhibited the ſame inactivity, the ſame apparent imbecility in our enemy. Nothing

* 5000 choſen troops.

can

can ſurely be more humiliating to this *ſuperb* nation, which preſumes to boaſt of maritime greatneſs, than to take a retroſpective view of their conduct through this war. Superior to us every where, in alliance with Spain, Holland, and the rebel Americans, we ſee their fleets traverſing the ſeas as tranſports, or riding in their harbours; for the moſt part acting upon the defenſive, or often inſulted by an inferior force. Admiral Darby, with a fleet of 19 ſail of the line, fell in with the enemy's fleet of 35 ſail, without any attempt on the part of the enemy to deſcry his force, or bring him to action. We ſee that excellent officer Admiral Kempenfelt, whoſe ſkill and judgment in his profeſſion were only equalled by his bravery, commanding 11 ſail of ſhips, attack, deſtroy, and take a number of merchant-men, with troops, in the face of a ſuperior fleet of 19 ſail of the line, 5 of which were firſt

rates.

fates. He perceived immediately what was to be done, and without hesitation pushed into the fleet between the men of war and merchant ships; did all that was practicable, and retired with his prizes. How would this have sat upon the stomachs of the English nation (had the case been reversed), to have had its trade destroyed in the sight of a fleet superior to the enemy?

Not to lose time, let us take a view of what was performed in the East Indies. Here the French fleet was commanded by a man who possessed great naval talents. The first time that Monsr. Suffrein made himself conspicuous, was in his attack upon our fleet commanded by Commodore Johnstone, in Porto Praya Bay, in the neutral island of St. Jago, belonging to the Portugueze; where, though we cannot boast that the conduct of our Commodore was faultless, yet the event of the battle, at the same time that it evinced

undaunted

undaunted reſolution in the Commodore, in our officers and ſailors of every deſcription, in merchant-men as well as men of war, betrayed, on the part of the enemy, great want of maritime knowledge, of diſcipline and ſkill. The Britiſh men of war were intermixed with the merchant ſhips, having anchored as they came into the Bay, without any form or order; ſo that ſome of them could not fire at the enemy, without hurting our own ſhips. Add to this, our Commodore was ſurpriſed: not that it appears from his Letter, he had any confidence the French Commodore would pay reſpect to the law of nations, but that he apprehended an attack ſo ſoon as he could diſcern that the ſhips were a ſquadron of the enemy's. Though he had little time to prepare for battle, and ſeveral of his ſeamen were on ſhore with the boats watering; yet, notwithſtanding theſe diſadvantages on the

ſide

ſide of the Britiſh fleet, the apparent confuſion of the enemy was ſuch, the unſeaman-like manner in which they brought their ſhips up to the attack, expoſed them to the well-directed fire of thoſe ſhips of the Engliſh which could bring their guns to bear, and they were beaten out of the Bay with loſs and diſgrace: and there can be little doubt that, had our fleet been moored in the beſt poſition of defence that the ſhape and anchorage in the Bay admitted, moſt of the enemy's ſhips would have ſhared the fate of the Hannibal *, and perhaps have been captured.

After this action, we next find Monſ. Suffrein commanding a fleet in the Eaſt Indies, oppoſed to the Britiſh fleet commanded by Sir Edward Hughes. Here we ſee him brave, ſkilful, and perſevering. He never met our Admiral, who appears

* Hannibal of 74 guns diſmaſted. See Commodore Johnſtone's Letter.

to have been every way worthy of ſuch an opponent, that he did not fairly join with him, with that ardor for battle which evinced the ſoul of heroiſm. It is generally acknowledged by the officers who were preſent (and Engliſhmen above all others are ever ready, perhaps too ready, to praiſe their enemies when their conduct is praiſe-worthy)—I ſay, it is acknowledged by thoſe who were witneſſes in the days of battle, that Monſ. Suffrein did every thing, made every exertion, that was poſſible in the power of a great Admiral, to defeat our fleet. But, in doing juſtice to the enemy, let us not deſcend from thoſe heights of pride to which every Engliſhman ſhould be elevated when he becomes a ſpectator of theſe battles. Let it be remembered, that this gallant Frenchman commanded a fleet always, except in the laſt battle, greatly ſuperior to Sir Edward Hughes; and that ſuch was the

ſteady and uniform gallanty of the Britiſh fleet, never more than half manned, that though attacked with uncommon ſpirit, it remained unſhaken in its firmneſs; and it is acknowledged, that one of the enemy's ſhips ſtruck—though from change of winds ſhe was not taken poſſeſſion of.

From the Eaſt let us traverſe the Equator again, and view the conduct of Comte de Graſſe, who we find had landed an army under the command of the Marquis de Bouille at the iſland of St. Chriſtopher's, which had capitulated, except the fortreſs of Brimſtone Hill, which held out, although inveſted on all ſides by an army of 7 or 8000 men; whilſt the French Admiral, with a fleet of 31 ſail of the line *, had

* Liſt of the Comte de Graſſe's Squadron at St. Kitt's.

	Guns		Guns
La Ville de Paris	110	Le Languedoc	84
La Coronne	84	L'Auguſte	84

had anchored in Baſſeterre Road, to co-operate with the land forces. Sir Samuel Hood, who commanded at this time the Britiſh fleet, conſiſting of 22 ſail of the line, ſails from Antigua with the reſolution of attacking the enemy's fleet at anchor; but the enemy anticipating his de-

	Guns		Guns
Le St. Eſprit	84	Le Conquérant	74
Le Duc de Bourgogne	84	Le Deſtin	74
*Le Triomphant	84	Le Palmier	74
Le Neptune	80	Le Sceptre	74
Le Hercule	74	Le Bien Aimé	74
Le Pluton	74	Le Magnifique	74
*Le Brave	74	Le Dauphin Royal	74
Le Hector	74	Le Bourgogne	74
Le Céſar	74	Le Scipion	74
Le Magnanime	74	Le Marſeillois	74
Le Souverain	74	L'Eveille	64
Le Citoyen	74	L'Ardent	64
Le Glorieux	74	Le Jaſon	64
Le Zele	74	Le Sagittaire	54
Le Northumberland	74		

* Joined at St. Kitt's.

ſign,

ſign, ſtood out to ſea. Sir Samuel manœuvres all night to keep the wind, and at break of day, being a-breaſt of the iſland of Nevis, makes the ſignal for the line of battle, ſtanding in ſhore; which obliged the French Admiral, who with his fleet was to leeward, to do the ſame, and of courſe to form by their leewardmoſt ſhips. This increaſed the diſtance of the two fleets, and opened to the Britiſh the road of Baſſeterre. It appears that the temptation inſtantly operated upon the judgement of the Britiſh Admiral. He ſeized the opportunity (the only one poſſible of gaining any advantage over a force ſo greatly ſuperior) and indicated, by ſignal, his intention of ſteering for the anchorage. Some little time was loſt by the leading ſhips not clearly comprehending the ſignals; ſo that the fleet was brought-to, and a frigate diſpatched to explain to every ſhip in the van the Admiral's intentions.

This delay permitted the French Admiral to approach; and our ſhips being obliged to bear away in ſucceſſion, in order to round the point of Nevis, the two fleets drew within gun-ſhot of each other. The French Admiral, at this time penetrating the deſign of Sir Samuel Hood, made all the ſail he could ſet, and fell furiouſly upon the rear of our fleet; which, however, proceeded ſteadily on; each ſhip anchoring in ſucceſſion, in a line of battle, agreeably to the ſignal flying; the Britiſh Admiral having twice backed his main top-ſail for the rear to cloſe, and at the ſame time to give the ſhips in the van time to be placed at their anchorage. This allowed the enemy to range up a-breaſt of the centre. The conduct of Comte de Graſſe at this period ſeemed to be that of an angry man, rather than that of a great Admiral occupied how he ſhould beſt employ the force of a ſuperior fleet, to deſtroy

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an audacious intruder. He came on with a preſs of ſail, paſſing many of the leading ſhips of his line, and firing furiouſly at every ſhip he approached. However, when he had penetrated as far as the Barfleur, Sir Samuel Hood's ſhip, his wrath abated, and he bore up out of the Bay, each ſhip following their Admiral. But the Britiſh fleet, being nearly placed before the rear of the enemy's ſhips, came up; theſe had alſo a ſhare in the action, by firing as they paſſed at our ſhips at anchor.

The anchorage of our fleet was moſt judicious; the ſhips occupying the whole ſpace from the Salt Pans, at the head of the Bay, to the outer part of Baſſeterre Road; the van ſhip being anchored ſo near the ſhore, that it would be impoſſible for the enemy to weather her; and ſo nearly upon the edge of the bank, that the enemy's fleet could not anchor with-

out it, and beyond the range of a ſhell from the batteries at Baſſeterre, at this time in the enemy's poſſeſſion. This brilliant manœuvre was at once ſo mortifying and diſtreſſing to the enemy, that Monſ. de Graſſe ſeemed determined the following morning to try the weight of his fleet, againſt the advantage of poſition, and advanced accordingly, his van ſhip leading in with the greateſt gallantry. The attack laſted for upwards of two hours. Each ſhip, firing along our line from the van, and paſſing under the ſtern of the laſt ſhip in the rear, ſtood in towards our frigates at anchor in ſhore; then wore, ſtood out again, and prepared for a ſecond attack. In the mean time Sir Samuel Hood ſtrengthened his rear, and anchored it more in the form of a creſcent; which was no ſooner done, than the enemy renewed the attack upon the centre, and rear. But finding it impoſſible to make

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any impreſſion, having loſt a number of men, and many of their ſhips being diſabled, they deſiſted from all further attempts, and were obliged to keep the ſea, much haraſſed, often diſaſtered by ſqualls of wind, to the amuſement of the Britiſh ſailors, who remained in comfort with their ſhips at anchor. This manœuvre, which had been a ſubject of admiration, even to the enemy, was undoubtedly the ſaving of Jamaica. The force which had been landed from the French fleet, to aſſiſt in the various labours of a ſiege, was of courſe withdrawn, and ſent on board their ſhips; and a great part of the French army was alſo diverted from giving their aſſiſtance at the ſiege *, for the protection of the town of Baſſeterre, which was always threatened by the Britiſh fleet;—beſides

* Brimſtone Hill is 9 miles diſtant from the town of Baſſeterre.

the encouragement it had given to the brave garriſon, the veteran General Fraſer adviſing Sir Samuel Hood, that he did not deſpair of being able to defend the Hill; and which he certainly did to the laſt, having held out 35 days; though the Marquis de Bouille, the French General, had declared, that if he had not expected to have taken it in as many hours, he would not have landed. Had it ſurrendered ten days ſooner, Jamaica muſt have fallen; and De Graſſe, greatly ſuperior to the Britiſh fleet, would have formed a junction with the Spaniards at Cape François, before the arrival of Sir George Rodney. It would have been a fortunate circumſtance, indeed, if Sir George had arrived three or four days ſooner, ſo as to have joined Sir Samuel Hood. St. Kitt's would have been ſaved, and the French Admiral compelled to fight, or to have abandoned the army

on

on ſhore.—I have been more particular in detailing the circumſtances of this celebrated manœuvre, becauſe there had been the ſame malignant ſpirit of envy at work, to detract from its merit, that we every where in hiſtory find purſuing the characters of illuſtrious men. But to proceed:

The garriſon of Brimſtone Hill is at length obliged to ſurrender, the Britiſh fleet ſtill at anchor: when it anſwering no purpoſe to remain longer where he was, Sir Samuel Hood notified to his fleet his intention of ſailing. The enemy had been reinforced by the Triomphant of 84, and the Brave of 74 guns—now making 33 ſail of the line. The French General, the Marquis de Bouille, ſpeaking from the ardor of an enterpriſing and perſevering ſpirit, told an Engliſh officer who was ſent with a flag of truce, that he reckoned upon the certain deſtruction of the Bri-

tiſh fleet. Now let us read the naval hiſtory of this country, and examine if the conduct of the French before had given us reaſon to believe, they would on ſuch an occaſion as this have ſuffered a Britiſh Admiral to depart without an action? Certain, however, it is, that ſo ſoon as the Hill ſurrendered, the French Admiral withdrew his ſhips and anchored in the road of Nevis, at the diſtance of four leagues, and to the windward of our fleet, not leaving a ſingle frigate or boat in the way; in order, as it were, to open the door as wide as poſſible, for a troubleſome intruder to depart—in want of bread, in want of water, and, what was worſe, in want of powder *. Sir Samuel joined Sir George Rodney a few days after, who had arrived (as I have ſaid before) only a few days too late.

* Some of the ſhips in the rear had fired away all their powder, in the three attacks of the enemy's fleet.

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We ſhall now follow Monſieur de Graſſe to Fort Royal, Martinique, and notice the preparations of an armament avowedly deſtined to form a junction with the Spaniards for the conqueſt of Jamaica. Notwithſtanding the late ſhabby behaviour of their fleet at St. Kitts, there ſeemed a ſort of inconſiſtent confidence in our enemy at this period. They did not think it at all neceſſary to conceal their intentions; and in ſight of our fleet, which was now ſuperior, they ſailed the moment they were ready. The Britiſh fleet was at anchor at this time at Gros Iſlet, St. Lucia; and on the 8th of April our cruiſers announced, that the French fleet was under ſail in Fort Royal Bay. Sir George Rodney inſtantly made the ſignal to weigh; and in a very ſhort time he was at ſea, and in purſuit of the enemy. Before night, the ſternmoſt of the French were ſeen from the maſt-heads. The purſuit continued; and,

and, before break of day, their lights were ſeen by all the fleet. Unluckily, our fleet was too ſoon brought-to; for, when day-light came, it was obſerved, that, if we had continued the purſuit half an hour longer, we ſhould have ſurrounded ſeven ſail of the line, and a large fleet of merchant ſhips, which were a-ſtern of the body of the enemy's fleet five or ſix leagues. The action that was afterwards brought on upon this day, the 9th of April, has been very properly related in Sir George Rodney's Letter. It is ſufficient for Engliſhmen to know, that our van reſiſted the whole force of the French fleet for many hours. After this day's action, the French Admiral induſtriouſly endeavoured to avoid a battle, plying to the windward between the iſlands of Dominica and Guadaloupe. In doing this, on the night of the 11th, one of his ſhips loſt her fore-maſt, by running foul of another; and

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at day-light ſhe was obſerved to leeward, towed by a frigate. Four ſhips were immediately diſpatched in chace *; and the French Admiral was obliged either to give her up, or riſque a battle. He determined on the latter, and immediately bore down on the Britiſh fleet. Our ſhips in chace were recalled; each fleet formed into a line of battle, and met on contrary tacks; the Britiſh on the ſtarboard tack, with an inverted line; Admiral Drake and his diviſion leading, inſtead of Sir Samuel Hood; occaſioned by ſome of the ſhips of the latter having been diſabled on the 9th. The water was perfectly ſmooth, the ſky ſerene and clear, with a fine commanding breeze of wind; and the relative poſition of the two fleets approaching to the battle, beautifully grand and animating. To an obſerver not perſonally concerned

* The Valiant, Monarch, Centaur, of 74 guns; and the Belliqueux, of 64.

in

in the conflict, the impending ſhock muſt have been awful and tremendous. At length, at half paſt ſeven, the ſignal was diſplayed on both ſides for battle, and ſoon after for cloſe action. The van diviſion, which was gallantly commanded by Admiral Drake, inſtantly received and returned the broadſides of the enemy; and in an inſtant all was involved in ſmoke. The fleets advancing, and the action becoming general, nothing is heard for hours but the repeated vollies of broadſides. Towards ten o'clock the ſmoke began to clear away; the battle raged with leſs fury; and it was obſerved that one of the enemy's ſhips * was totally diſmaſted, and that the Prince George had loſt her foremaſt. It was alſo perceived, that the Britiſh ſhips a-head of Sir George Rodney in the line, had paſſed to leeward of the whole of the

* The Glorieux.

enemy's

enemy's line; that Sir George had ſailed through their line, four ſhips a-ſtern of their Admiral in the centre; and that Sir Samuel Hood in the rear had ſailed through the enemy's line alſo, leaving Monſieur de Graſſe to leeward of him, and keeping nine ſail of the enemy to the windward of him. Here the battle continued to rage, the wind having been lulled by the din of cannon to a perfect calm, ſo that ſome of the ſhips of this diviſion got out their boats to tow; and the action laſted until ſeveral of the ſhips had fired away all their powder; particularly the Monarch, which had tacked, and was engaged with the laſt ſhip of the enemy that had paſſed to the windward of our rear diviſion. At this time Sir Samuel Hood ſent a boat on board the Centaur, with orders for her to ſuſtain the Monarch, and attack the ſhip ſhe was engaged with. At the ſame time he made the ſignal for each ſhip of his diviſion to

crowd

crowd ſail after the enemy, to prevent them from uniting with their Admiral, who at this time was endeavouring to rally his ſhips, which were ſometimes retreating, and ſometimes turning their broadſides to the Britiſh ſhips that approached them; but they all appeared in panic and confuſion, and greatly diſabled. At four o'clock the Céſar ſurrendered to the Centaur, after an obſtinate defence, and not before ſhe was run on board, and the colours ſtruck by the Britiſh ſailors *. The Hector ſtruck ſoon afterwards to the Canada and Alcide; and at half paſt five the Belliqueux ran along-ſide the Ardent who ſurrendered immediately. The impetuous courage of Sir Samuel Hood in the Barfleur, puſhing into their fleet with his ſtudding ſails ſet,

* The Céſar caught fire at eight o'clock, and blew up at ten. Two hundred French priſoners periſhed; and two lieutenants, a lieutenant of marines, boatſwain, and thirty-ſeven ſeamen belonging to the Centaur.

had

had advanced him before the bow of the Ville de Paris. It was at this period that Comte de Graſſe ſaw that all proſpect of eſcaping was vain—an Engliſh Admiral being between him and the ſhips which ought to have ſuſtained him. The ſun was half ſunk in the horizon when Sir Samuel ſheered towards the French Admiral, to make ſure of ſo glorious a conqueſt, which was ſoon obtained; and the Ville de Paris was taken poſſeſſion of, after a ſhort but ſharp conteſt, by the Barfleur. —Whatever the panic might have been before, the diſmay of the enemy's fleet, on ſeeing the flag of France ſurrender, may now eaſily be imagined. But the enemy was ſoon relieved from further anxiety by the Britiſh Admiral, Sir George Rodney, making the ſignal for the fleet to bring-to; and the Britiſh fleet was accordingly brought-to.—I am not diſpoſed to argue, that we reaped the full harveſt of

this victory; but I do inſiſt upon it, that no fleet was ever more completely beaten, conquered, defeated, or overthrown, call it by what name you pleaſe, than this French fleet; whilſt the victorious fleet appeared, in compariſon, to have ſuffered very little damage. The Prince George had loſt her foremaſt; but in other reſpects ſhe was as fit for action as when the fight began, and had only nine men killed. Some ſhips had not loſt a ſingle man. One cannot help inquiring how it happens, that there was ſuch difference in the havoc that was made in the two fleets. The French fleet moſt undoubtedly came boldly on, and did fire their guns. Is it that they fail in ſkill—in the management and pointing of their guns? or is it, that, when they come to cloſe action, their ſkill and preſence of mind forſake them, and they are under an influence which Britiſh ſailors are ſtrangers to, in the moment of

danger?

danger? Be this as it will, the event of this battle clearly proves, that there is a wonderful difference in the effects produced by Britiſh and French broadſides. Engliſhmen have reaſon to be proud of this victory, ſo fully demonſtrating the ſuperior naval proceſs of their nation; and that, inſtead of its ſpirit being upon the decline, this glorious 12th of April proved beyond compariſon its ſplendour, and gave us trophies which on no former occaſion we could ever boaſt of. It is certain, that hiſtory does not furniſh us with an example of a ſimilar victory. I expect indeed to find cavillers, and deſponding drivillers who goſſip in coffee-houſes, and will not allow any thing has been done well that was not done *in their time*—but I challenge them to bring an inſtance, where the *great fleets* of France and England have been drawn up together *in line of battle*, and have fought *when their force*

has been nearly equal *, of any ſhip being taken. Here it has happened, that we have not only taken their ſhips—but their Admiral's ſhip, a firſt rate, is borne into one of our ports, and the French Admiral perſonally exhibited to the gazing inhabitants of our metropolis. I do not

* The great ſeafights *in this deſcription*, between the two nations, are:

The battle off Malaga. See Campbell's Admirals, Vol. III. p. 72.

The battle of Bantry Bay—Admiral Herbert. Ibid. Vol. . p. .

The battles in the Eaſt Indies—Admiral Pocock and Monſieur d'Aché. Ibid. Vol. IV. p. 131.

The battle in the Eaſt Indies—Commodore Peyton and Monſieur Bourdonnois. Ibid. Vol. IV. p. 58.

The unfortunate battle of Minorca—Admiral Byng and Monſieur Galiſſonniere. Ibid. Vol. IV. p. 80.

The battle of Matthews and Leſtock I do not enumerate, as the French fleet was combined with that of Spain.

In Sir Edward Hawke's victory over Monſieur Conflans, the fleets were not drawn up in a line; and it may be ſaid that the enemy fled without a battle, as we had not above five or ſix ſhips that got into action.

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mean to inſult this unfortunate, and certainly brave man; but to prove, that the character of our enemy, as a great maritime nation, has never ſuffered ſuch diſgrace.

To ſay that the flag of France was not abandoned, on the 12th of April, by its fleet, is abſurd. Was not the Ville de Paris left the laſt ſhip, when preſſed by the Britiſh fleet? Was any French ſhip in the way, when the Barfleur ranged along-ſide of her? Did either of her ſeconds attempt to ſtop the career of the Barfleur, by laying her on board, or dropping aſtern to take up the fire of the approaching enemy? Certainly not. Who then can be attended to with patience, who aſſerts, that the ſhips compoſing the French fleet did not abandon their flag?

Before I quit this ſubject, I ſhall offer ſome remarks on the two Letters ſent home by Sir George Rodney after the

battle, and endeavour to rectify ſome miſtakes which have been imbibed, and may be tranſmitted to poſterity by the hiſtorian, if not corrected. In the firſt Letter, Sir George ſpeaks of the exertions and gallant conduct of Sir Samuel Hood in the warmeſt encomiums. In the next Letter*

Sir

* *Admiralty Office, May* 18, 1782.

Lord Cranſton, one of the Captains of His Majeſty's ſhip the Formidable, and Captain Byron of the Andromache, in which ſhip his Lordſhip came paſſenger, arrived early this morning with diſpatches from Admiral Sir George Bridges Rodney, Bart. to Mr. Stephens, of which the following are copies:

SIR, *Formidable, at Sea, April* 14, 1782.

IT has pleaſed God, out of his divine Providence, to grant to His Majeſty's arms a moſt complete victory over the fleet of his enemy commanded by the Count de Graſſe, who is himſelf captured, with the Ville de Paris and four more ſhips of the fleet, beſides one ſunk in the action. This important victory was obtained the 12th inſtant, after a battle which laſted with unremitting fury from ſeven in the morning till half paſt ſix in the evening, when the ſetting

ſun

Sir George ſays, he has diſpatched Sir Samuel Hood and his diviſion in queſt of the

ſun put an end to the conteſt. Both fleets have greatly ſuffered: but it is with the higheſt ſatisfaction I can aſſure their Lordſhips, that though the masts, ſails, rigging and hulls of the Britiſh fleet are damaged, yet the loſs of men has been but ſmall, conſidering the length of the battle and the cloſe action they ſo long ſuſtained, and in which both fleets looked upon the honour of their King and Country to be moſt eſſentially concerned. The great ſupply of naval ſtores lately arrived in the Weſt Indies, will, I flatter myſelf, ſoon repair all the damages His Majeſty's fleet has ſuſtained. The gallant behaviour of the officers and men of the fleet I had the honour to command, has been ſuch as muſt for ever endear them to all lovers of their King and Country. The noble behaviour of my ſecond in command Sir Samuel Hood, who in both actions moſt conſpicuouſly exerted himſelf, demands my warmeſt encomiums. My third in command, Rear-Admiral Drake, who with his diviſion led the battle on the 12th inſtant, deſerves the higheſt praiſe; nor leſs can be given to Commodore Affleck, for his gallant behaviour in leading the centre diviſion. My own Captain, Sir Charles Douglas, merits every thing I can poſſibly ſay: his unremitted diligence and activity greatly eaſed me in the unavoidable fatigue of the day. In ſhort, I want words to expreſs how ſenſible I am of the me-

the enemy, becauſe it had ſuffered leaſt, being in the rear (on the 12th). Who can

ritorious conduct of all the Captains, Officers, and Men, who had a ſhare in this glorious victory, obtained by their gallant exertions. The enemy's whole army, conſiſting of 5500 men, were on board their ſhips of war. The deſtruction among them muſt be prodigious, as for the greateſt part of the action every gun told; and their Lordſhips may judge what havoc muſt have been made, when the Formidable fired near eighty broadſides. Incloſed I have the honour to ſend for their Lordſhips' inſpection the Britiſh and French lines of battle, with an account of the killed and wounded, and damages ſuſtained by his Majeſty's fleet. Lord Cranſtor, who acted as one of the Captains of the Formidable during both actions, and to whoſe gallant behaviour I am much indebted, will have the honour of delivering theſe diſpatches. To him I muſt refer their Lordſhips for every minute particular they may wiſh to know, he being perfectly maſter of the whole tranſaction. That the Britiſh flag may for ever flouriſh in every quarter of the globe, is the moſt ardent wiſh of him who has the honour of being, with great regard, SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

G. B. RODNEY.

To Philip Stephens, Eſq.

SIR,

can read this letter without feeling ſomething more than aſtoniſhment, when at the ſame time we are preſented with vouchers,

SIR, *Formidable, at Sea, April* 20, 1782.

SINCE my laſt diſpatches of the 14th inſtant, ſent by Lord Cranſton in his Majeſty's ſhip Andromache, I muſt deſire you will be pleaſed to acquaint their Lordſhips, that the fleet under my command, in their way to reconnoitre the bays of Baſſeterre, St. Chriſtopher's, and St. Euſtatius, and obſerve if the enemy's fleet had attempted to ſheiter themſelves in thoſe bays, were becalmed for three days under the iſland of Guadaloupe; in which time we were employed in repairing the ſhattered condition of the ſhips under my command. The moment we had a breeze, I diſpatched frigates to St. Chriſtopher's and St. Euſtatius. In the latter road, inſtead of the vaſt crowd of ſhips that uſed to be anchored, there were only two ſmall ſchooners; at St. Chriſtopher's, none but armed ſhips. Being by this convinced, that the enemy's defeated fleet were gone to leeward, I diſpatched Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, whoſe diviſion (having being in the rear on the day of battle) had received much leſs damage than the van or centre, to proceed, with all the ſail they could make, to the weſt end of St. Domingo, in hopes that he might pick up ſome of the ſtraggling diſabled ſhips of the enemy; and I am now following

vouchers, ſigned by the Admiral, which conveys a flat contradiction to his poſition *? In theſe we ſee, that Sir Samuel Hood's diviſion had loſt nearly as many men as the two other diviſions put together. It does not ſignify whether it happened on the 9th or 12th; it was done in deſtroying the French fleet. But on the 12th it loſt more men than the van diviſion, and upon the whole ſuffered more; and at the period when the Letter was written, the Royal Oak (without main

lowing myſelf with the remainder of the fleet to join him off Cape Tiberoon. It is with great ſatisfaction I acquaint their Lordſhips, that the enemy's battering cannon, travelling carriages, and train of artillery, are in the ſhips captured; which are not only a loſs to the enemy, but may be of the greateſt ſervice in the iſland of Jamaica. Incloſed I ſend duplicates of my diſpatches by the Andromache, and have the honour to be, &c.

G. B. RODNEY.

To Philip Stephens, Eſq.

* See the liſt of killed and wounded, in the annexed Line of Battle, &c.

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LINE OF BATTLE

ON THE 12th OF APRIL, 1782,

When the Action commenced, the Fleet on the Starboard Tack.

	Ships	Commanders	Guns	Men	K.	W.	Officers killed and wounded.
VAN DIVISION, Rear-Admiral FRANCIS SAMUEL DRAKE.	Marlborough	Taylor Penny	74	600	3	16	
	Arrogant	Samuel Corniſh	74	600	4	11	
	Alcide	Char. Thompſon	74	600	5	17	
	Nonſuch	William Truſcott	64	500	3	3	
	Conqueror	George Balfour	74	600	7	23	
	Princeſſa	Fran. S. Drake / C. Knatchbull	70	577	3	22	Lieutenants Dundas and M'Douall wounded; Lieutenant Laban of the Marines ditto.
	Prince George	John Williams	90	750	9	24	
	Torbay	J. Lewis Gidoin	74	600	10	25	Lieutenant Mounier of Marines killed.
	Anſon	William Blair	64	500	3	13	Captain Blair killed.
	Fame	Robert Barber	74	600	3	12	
	Ruſſell	James Saumarez	74	600	10	29	
					154	293	

* Lord Cranſton alſo aſſiſted as one of the Captains, of whom honourable mention is made in Sir George Rodney's Letter.

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	Anson	William Blair	64	500	3	13	Captain Blair killed.
	Fame	Robert Barber	74	600	3	12	
	Ruffell	James Saumarez	74	600	10	29	
		Total			60	184	
CENTRE DIVISION. Admiral Sir GEORGE BRIDGES RODNEY.	America	Sam. Thompson	64	500	1	1	Lieutenant Collowhill killed, Lieut. Trelawney wounded
	Hercules	Henry Savage	74	600	7	19	Lieutenant Hobert kiled; Captain Savage wounded
	Prothée	Charles Buckner	64	500	5	25	Mr. Love, Master, wounded.
	Resolution	Ld. Rob. Manners	74	600	4	35	Captain wounded, since dead.
	Agamemnon	Benj. Caldwell	64	500	14	24	Lieutenants Incledon and Brice wounded, latter since dead.
	Duke	Allan Gardner	90	750	13	60	Lieut. Cornish, Mr. Cooper, Mas. Mr. Scott, Boats. wounded.
	Formidable	Sir Geo. Rodney, Sir C. Douglas, John Symonds *	90	750	15	39	Lieutenant Hale killed; Captain Bell and Lieutenant Harris of Marines wounded.
	Namur	Robert Fanshaw	90	750	6	25	
	Saint Albans	John Inglis	64	500	0	6	
	Canada	Hon. W. Cornwallis	74	600	12	23	
	Repulse	Tho. Dumaresque	64	500	3	11	Captain of Marines and Master wounded.
	Ajax	Nich. Charington	74	600	9	40	Mr. John Elliott, first Lieutenant, wounded.
	Bedford	Com. Affleck, Thomas Graves	74	600	0	17	
		Total			89	329	
REAR DIVISION. Rear-Admiral Sir SAMUEL HOOD, Bart.	Prince William	Geo. Wilkinson	64	500	0	0	
	Magnificent	Robert Linzee	74	600	6	11	Captain Bagg of the Marines wounded.
	Centaur	John Inglefield	74	650	7	13	Lieutenant Hayes of the ship, with the Lieutenant of Marines, Boatswain, two Midshipmen, and 37 men blown up in the César.
	Belliqueux	Alex. Sutherland	64	500	4	10	
	Warrior	Sir James Wallace	74	600	5	21	Mr. Stone, Master, wounded.
	Monarch	Francis Reynolds	74	600	16	33	
	Barfleur	Sir S. Hood, Bt., Captain Knight	90	750	10	37	
	Valiant	P. Cr. Goodall	74	650	10	28	Lieut. Wimbleton killed; Lieut. Brown, and Mas. wounded
	Yarmouth	Anthony Parry	64	500	14	33	
	Montague	George Bowen	74	600	12	31	Mr. Cade, Master, killed; Lieutenants Breedon and Buchan of Marines wounded.
	Alfred	William Bayne	74	600	12	40	Captain killed.
	Royal Oak	Thomas Burnett	74	600	21	40	Mr. Gwatkin first Lieutenant, and Boatswain killed, Captain of Marines wounded.
		Total			117	293	
Centaur's men blown up in the César					37	0	
					154	293	

* Lord Cranston also assisted as one of the Captains, of whom honourable mention is made in Sir George Rodney's Letter.

top or topmaſt) and Centaur, both ſhips of the rear diviſion *, were abſent with prizes, and did not join the fleet till they returned to Jamaica. It was from the circumſtance of Sir Samuel Hood's diviſion being in the rear, that it ſuffered moſt. It fell calm when the enemy's van came abreaſt of the rear diviſion; and here the battle laſted as long as any battle can laſt—that is, ſo long as ſhips have powder to fire.

The exertions of Sir Samuel Hood were certainly very great †. Being a ſubordinate Admiral, he could not make the general ſignal to chace the beaten and flying enemy, agreeably to the Fighting Inſtructions; but he made each ſhip's ſignal of his own diviſion, to crowd ſail after them. It is indeed underſtood, that a difference of

* The Alcide, of the van diviſion, was alſo abſent.

† The Barfleur having her maintopſail-yard ſhot away, another yard was got up, and a new ſail bent, whilſt the firing continued.

opinion

opinion took place betwixt the two Commanders, in what manner the victory could be beſt improved; Sir Samuel Hood contending vehemently, that the enemy's broken fleet ſhould be purſued ſo long as a ſhip remained untaken. But we would not willingly ſuppoſe, that even this could excite any ungenerous ſentiment in the breaſt of Sir George. It is more agreeable to believe, that the letter had been ſigned in the hurry of buſineſs, and that ſo glaring a contradiction had eſcaped the Admiral's notice; as well as another miſtake which appears in his firſt Letter, where he ſays, the centre diviſion was led by Commodore Affleck. The rear of the centre diviſion was, certainly, gallantly brought up by the Commodore; but it was *led* by Captain Samuel Thompſon of the America, the oldeſt ſeaman in the fleet. Why the credit of leading the diviſion ſhould have been taken from this

gentleman,

gentleman, at the expence of truth, we cannot account for, otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing it to have proceeded from inadvertency. I return to the operations of the fleet.

Sir Samuel Hood was at length ſent with his diviſion in purſuit of the enemy's ſcattered ſquadron; and on the 19th of April, in the Mona Paſſage, gave chace to two line of battle ſhips and three frigates. One of the frigates eſcaped, but the reſt were taken; the Jaſon and Caton of 64 guns each, and the Aimable and Ceres frigates. I ſhould not do juſtice to the character of Captain Goodall of the Valiant, if I did not mention his active gallantry in this ſervice. It was to be apprehended, that both the line of battle ſhips would endeavour to run aſhore, from which they were at no great diſtance. The Valiant outſailing the reſt of the ſhips, came up firſt with the enemy

being followed by the Monarch, Captain Reynolds); and running close along-side the Caton, the sternmost, she surrendered without making the least resistance. Captain Goodall, eager to attack the other ship (the Jason) before she reached the shore, left the Caton to be taken possession of by the ships coming up; and, pushing on with a press of sail, soon brought the Jason to action. This ship defended herself for 40 minutes; when being greatly disabled, and having lost a number of men, she struck. The Valiant received little or no damage in the action. Thus we see two line of battle ships taken with less difficulty in this war, than ever happened in any former war; which may be proved by comparing actions*, when ships were similarly circumstanced.

I shall

* In the war before the last, the Raisonnable, a French line of battle ship of 64 guns, was chased by a fleet of British

I ſhall take occaſion in this place (quitting the great war of fleets for a while) to ſhew, that in the actions of ſmall ſquadrons, and ſingle ſhips, the French are

Britiſh ſhips. The Dorſetſhire, of 66 guns, outſtripped the reſt, and got along-ſide of her; a furious action commenced, and was ſuſtained with equal vivacity on both ſides for two hours; when the Achilles of 60 guns coming up, put an end to the conflict. The Raiſonnable was obliged to ſurrender; but her adverſary had ſuffered equally in the battle. The Orphée, a French ſhip of 64 guns, diſplayed the ſame kind of brilliant obſtinacy in the ſame war; and did not ſurrender to the Revenge of 70 guns, when chaced by a fleet; until a ſecond Engliſh ſhip came up; and the action had been ſo well conteſted, that both ſhips had equally ſuffered. There is no inſtance of any thing ſimilar during the laſt war. There was a point of honour maintained by theſe two ſhips, which determined them not to ſurrender to ſingle ſhips, though there was a certainty of being taken when once brought to action by the ſhips coming up. The capture of the Foudroyant in the war before the laſt, is a glorious proof of a Britiſh man of war (the Monmouth) doing her duty. But no perſon can ſay, that the French Commander did not defend his ſhip as long as there was any fighting in her; and he did not ſurrender until his main-maſt fell, and another Engliſh ſhip came up.

not

not ſuch obſtinate enemies to contend with, as they have been. The Prothée, a French ſhip of 64 guns, was chaced the laſt war by a fleet returning from Gibraltar, under the command of Admiral Digby. The Reſolution of 74 guns, commanded by Lord Robert Manners, and bearing the broad pendant of Sir Chaloner Ogle, was the firſt ſhip up with her; and upon firing a broadſide the enemy ſurrendered.

The Pegaſe, a new French line of battle ſhip of 74 guns, in company with two other line of battle ſhips, was chaced by a ſquadron commanded by Admiral Barrington. Night came on; but Captain John Jarvis, of the Foudroyant, kept ſight of her, and continued the chace until he got along-ſide of her; when the ſuperior fire of his well diſciplined ſhip ſoon compelled her to ſurrender, having loſt a number of her men; whilſt the Foudroyant loſt only one. I think it

almoſt

almoſt needleſs to go further to prove, that a French man of war was taken with greater eaſe during the laſt, than in the war before, or in any former war. Yet nibblers at reputation had the *ſhrewdneſs* to diſcover, that the Britiſh ſhip had three guns more on a ſide than the Pegaſe; and, becauſe the latter was taken with eaſe, would ſcarcely allow that there was any merit in the captor. But that Captain has certainly the moſt merit, who ſubdues his enemy with leaſt loſs to himſelf. It not only ſhews the effect of deliberate ſkill and courage, but alſo evidently proves that his ſhip's company have been better trained and diſciplined. Cavillers, notwithſtanding, inflamed with envy, or actuated by party ſpirit, have at one moment endeavoured to take from the merit, and obſcure the luſtre of meritorious actions, and at other times, praiſe conduct highly cenſurable; inſomuch that

the hiſtorian will be puzzled to diſtinguiſh officers who have performed their duty, from thoſe who have not. In the former war, on the contrary, there was a tenatious pride for the reputation of the ſervice at large; and inſtead of any attempt to diminiſh the merit of a commander, he had at leaſt all the credit he was entitled to. Captain Jervis obtained the moſt honourable mark of his Sovereign's approbation that a military man can receive, being inveſted with the order of the Bath. And when it is recollected, that the ſafety of the kingdom abſolutely depends upon the exertions of our Naval Commanders, it will, I believe, be readily admitted, that no man has a better title to this honourable diſtinction, than the officer who takes from the enemy a 74 gun ſhip.

I have another caſe in point, which I am proud to mention, to corroborate my opinion

opinion of the inferior prowefs of the French as a maritime power, during the *laft war*. This is the capture of the Solitaire French man of war, of 64 guns. The Solitaire was with the French what we call a crack fhip; that is, fhe was fuppofed to be in the beft condition for fervice, and a prime failer; and as fuch was (in company with another fhip of the fame force) cruifing to windward of Martinique, when fhe was chaced by the fleet under the command of Sir Richard Hughes. The Ruby (Capt. John Collins) of 64 guns came up with her, and a very fharp action enfued. In forty minutes the Solitaire ftruck her colours, being totally difabled and filenced, with a great number of men killed and wounded: whereas the Ruby loft but four men; and was fo little difabled, that, in all probability, fhe would have taken fuch another fhip immediately with great eafe.

Among the officers who ſeemed covetous of fame, whom Fortune favoured, and who never ſlighted her favours, we find Sir James Wallace, commanding the Experiment of 50 guns (having previouſly diſtinguiſhed himſelf under the command of Lord Howe in America, for which he had received the honour of knighthood), having with him the Pallas of 32 guns, Capt. Davy; Unicorn of 20 guns, Capt. Ford; Fortune of 14 guns, Capt. Hamilton; and Cabot brig of 12 guns, Capt. Dodd. With theſe he deſtroyed or captured three frigates which had taken ſhelter under the cover of a fort in Concale Bay, on the coaſt of France. The impatience of Sir James Wallace to ſilence this fort, had run his ſhip a ground, in a poſition that expoſed him to be raked, until the fort blew up. This circumſtance, however, did not prevent the commanders of the other ſhips from ſetting fire

fire to two of the French frigates, and bringing off the third, the Danae, of 32 guns. Sir James ſeldom went to ſea that he did not fall in with the enemy's ſhips. In the Nonſuch of 64 guns, he took the Belle Poule, and deſtroyed the Legere on the coaſt of France, both frigates of 36 guns. In the ſame ſhip he had a ſevere conflict with the Active of 74 guns. In this inſtance it is to be lamented, that he evinced rather an over-greedineſs of glory; for being ordered to chace from the fleet, and having ſoon diſcovered that the chace was a large ſhip of the line, he diſdained to aſk for that aſſiſtance, which would have been ſent to him if he had made known to his Admiral the ſize of the enemy. But with a croud of ſail, having loſt ſight of the fleet before it was dark, he continued the purſuit, until he ran on board the enemy's ſhip in the night, and engaged her until both parties

ſeparated greatly diſabled. In the morning Sir James renewed the attack, and was very roughly handled by the ſuperior force and weight of metal of his opponent. The French commander, however, acted only upon the defenſive, continuing his courſe, and leaving the Nonſuch in a condition unable to purſue.

I ſhall take occaſion in this place to contraſt the conduct of a Britiſh commander, under ſimilar circumſtances, with the conduct of the commander of the Active. Captain Salter, of the Santa Margaretta of 36 guns, fell in with the French fleet on the coaſt of America, and was chaced by ſeveral ſhips. One frigate of the enemy, outſailing the reſt, continued the purſuit until the French fleet were out of ſight; when ſhe ſhortened ſail and tacked. Capt. Salter inſtantly tacked his ſhip, and chaced in his turn the purſuer; which being obſerved by the Captain of

the French frigate, he inſtantly retacked, in order to accept the daring challenge. Both frigates were of equal force, as to number of guns; but the enemy had more men, her ſhot were heavier, and ſhe was encouraged by having a fleet at her back: —whereas the Britiſh Captain ran a riſque which even ſucceſs could ſcarcely juſtify; for, had his ſhip met with thoſe diſaſters which are the mere effects of chance; had he loſt a top-maſt or a topſail yard, he was ſure, even if victorious, of not eſcaping the enemy's advancing fleet. It appears, however, that theſe prudential reaſons had no weight with the Britiſh commander and his gallant crew, who were impatient for battle. The ſhips met, and manœuvred to cloſe with each other on the ſame tack; and after a deſperate action of an hour and a quarter, the French frigate * was

* L'Amazone, of 36 guns, commanded by the Viſcount Montguiote.

ſilenced, and compelled to ſurrender; her Captain with 70 of his men being ſlain, and 70 wounded. Among the killed were two Lieutenants; and the Second Captain and the reſt of the officers were dangerouſly wounded. The Britiſh frigate had only one midſhipman and four ſeamen killed, and the boatſwain and 16 ſeamen wounded. Such intrepidity ſhould always be crowned with ſucceſs; but the following morning Captain Salter was obliged to abandon his prize, being cloſely purſued by the whole of the French fleet. I cannot find, in the hiſtory of our former wars, that in any action between frigates *, there ever were ſuch evident proofs of ſuperior ſkill

* The French frigates before the laſt war were upon a much ſmaller ſcale; yet there is not an inſtance where they did not defend themſelves with great obſtinacy. The Arethuſa of 32 guns, the war before the laſt, though ſhe had loſt her maintopmaſt, reſiſted for a conſiderable time the efforts of two frigates of equal force, the Venus and Thames.

ſkill and proweſs, when all the circumſtances are conſidered, as what I have juſt related. It appears that the Engliſh frigate had only a ſhort time given her to try her force, her adverſary being backed by a fleet. And perhaps with the greateſt poſſible degree of human bravery, and the utmoſt perfection of naval ſkill and diſcipline, it would not have been poſſible to do more execution: or to put a ſhip of equal force out of fighting condition in a ſhorter ſpace of time than Captain Salter did; and to loſe in the action ſo few men as were killed in the Engliſh frigate.

Thames. The Brune alſo, a French frigate of 32 guns, in the ſame war, fought the Venus of 36 for two hours, and did not ſurrender until engaged alſo by the Juno of 32. The Danae of 36 guns, a large French frigate, ſimilar to thoſe we had to contend with laſt war, reſiſted a long time the united efforts of the Melampe of 36, and the Southampton, of 32 guns, before ſhe ſtruck. The Bellona French frigate, of 32 guns, maintained the fight gallantly for four hours againſt the Veſtal of the ſame force, commanded by Captain Samuel Hood, before ſhe ſurrendered.

Captain

Captain Pownall alſo, in the Apollo of 32 guns, fell in with the Oiſeau, a French frigate of the ſame number of guns, on the coaſt of France, and after an action of an hour and a half compelled her to ſurrender. The ſlaughter on board the enemy's ſhip was conſiderable, but the Apollo ſuffered not materially. This excellent and intrepid officer was killed in battle afterwards, engaging a French ſhip, which eſcaped by running aſhore on the coaſt of Flanders.

Of the French ſhips that were taken in the laſt war, the Capricieux frigate appears to have made the moſt reſpectable defence, when attacked with great gallantry by Captain Waldegrave, of the Prudente frigate of 36 guns, and Captain Cadogan, of the Licorne of 32. But it is certain, that French frigates of inferior force did as much in the war before.

As

As the great ſhips of both nations generally ſailed in large fleets, it was very rare that ſingle ſhips of the line met. We find, however, a private ſhip of war (if ſhe may be ſo called, for ſhe was commanded by King's officers, with 250 King's troops on board acting as marines) was met, in the Iriſh Channel, by the Bienfaiſant, Captain Macbride. This ſhip of the enemy had, with reaſon, created great alarm amongſt our merchants, being a ſhip of 64 guns, called the Comte d'Artois, commanded by Monſ. Clonard, an active, enterprizing young man, born in France of Iriſh parents. In the midſt of a large convoy of Engliſh merchant ſhips, ſhe was ſurpriſed at day-light by an Engliſh line of battle ſhip being along-ſide of her. Monſ. Clonard, it ſeems, had trained his people for boarding; and to lure the Engliſh Captain to approach him, had hoiſted Engliſh colours, that he might grapple

grapple the Bienfaifant. But he unluckily met with a man highly ſkilful in his profeſſion; who hailing the enemy, dared him to ſhew his proper colours, at the ſame time he fired into him; and availing himſelf of his ſeamanſhip, as well as of the ſuperior ſailing of the Bienfaifant, took ſuch poſitions as effectually diſappointed the French Captain in his project of boarding; at the ſame moment raking his opponent fore and aft with ſuch effect, that the enemy was ſoon compelled to ſurrender. The Charon, Captain Symonds, having alſo come up at the cloſe of the action, the enemy's ſhip was greatly diſabled, and loſt a number of men; whilſt the Bienfaifant had ſuffered ſo little, that no perſon could have told ſhe had been in action. This happened, no doubt, from the judicious management of the Britiſh Captain. Yet, from this excellent good conduct it was, that detractors

were

were inclined to leſſen the merit of taking this ſhip with ſo much eaſe. They would not underſtand why the Britiſh Captain did not lie along-ſide the French ſhip, and give the enemy an opportunity of killing Britiſh ſeamen with French broadſides; and talked of giving fair play, as they would to two bruiſers upon a fighting ſtage. I believe there is no inſtance when a private ſhip of war of ſuch force was taken with ſo much eaſe, in any war before the laſt *.

Monſ. Clonard was not the only officer who had reaſon to repent of his plan of boarding. The French undoubtedly, at this period, encouraged their officers to try the impetuoſity of their courage in this way; repreſenting to them, that the fire of their characters ſword in hand would give

* The St. Florentine French private ſhip of war, of 60 guns, fought the Achilles of 60, for two hours the war before laſt, and did not ſurrender until her mainmaſt fell.

them

them an advantage over the cool-blooded courage of the Engliſh; which has always been fatal to their enemies in a long battle where deliberate ſkill was required. The enemy built ſome of their frigates wall-ſided, that they might with more facility paſs from one ſhip to another; and they held up as examples of fortune the exploits of Du Guay Trouin and Monſieur Fourbin, who had ſucceeded by boarding.

Thoſe who are acquainted with the quick and impatient temper of the French nation, cannot be ſurpriſed that their officers (eſpecially thoſe who were young or in the prime of life) were pleaſed, that this mode of fighting was recommended to them; and many of them, no doubt, were panting with ardeur to diſtinguiſh themſelves. Among theſe, it ſeems, was the Chevalier du Romain, who commanded a fine frigate on the improved conſtruction, called

called the Nymphe, of 36 guns and 300 men. This frigate, in as perfect a ſtate of good condition as was poſſible, fell in with the Flora, of 36 guns, commanded by Captain Peere Williams, and 250 men, on her firſt cruize, but ſo badly manned, (her complement being compoſed of landſmen, or ſeamen who were not able-bodied) that the Lords of the Admiralty were made acquainted, before ſhe ſailed, of the miſerable condition of her crew. Captain Williams *, however, bore down upon the enemy's ſhip ſo ſoon as he ſaw her; which brought-to, and waited the attack; and when the combatants were within piſtol ſhot the action commenced. The Flora's wheel being ſoon ſhot away, ſhe became ungovernable, and fell on board the Nymphe; in which poſition the two ſhips continued their cannonade, firing with ſmall

* This officer had a ſevere action alſo with a Dutch frigate in the Flora, which ſurrendered to him.

arms

arms from the tops, and puſhing through the ports with pikes. At length the enemy made a deſperate attempt to board. The Second Captain, followed by other officers and a great number of men, advanced upon the gangway of the Flora, ſword in hand; but were received with ſo much bravery, that the officers and moſt of their men were killed by pikes, or puſhed overboard. Thoſe who eſcaped into their ſhip were purſued, and driven off their own decks with great ſlaughter; the enemy's colours were ſtruck, the ſhip taken poſſeſſion of by the victors, and carried into port. The Nymphe afterwards proved one of the fineſt ſailing ſhips in the Britiſh navy. Among the ſlain were the gallant Chevalier du Romain and moſt of his officers, with 60 men; whereas the Flora loſt only eight.

At the commencement of the war, the Britiſh commanders had to apprehend

hend great naval talents and bravery in ſome of the French officers. Amongſt the latter, the name of Monſieur La Motte Piquet was eminently placed. His firſt eſſay was on board the Saint Eſprit of 84 guns, having the honour to command the ſhip which diſplayed the flag of the Duc de Chartres. But, as an officer can never be ſo well known in a ſubordinate as in a principal command, I will endeavour to find him under the latter deſcription.

We ſee in the naval records of the laſt war, that the Honourable Captain William Cornwallis, commanding the Lion of 64 guns, having with him the Chatham of 50, and Janus of 44, fell in with a ſquadron of French ſhips commanded by Monſieur La Motte Piquet, conſiſting of the Hannibal and Diadem of 74 guns each, the Refléchi of 64, and the Amphion of 50. The Engliſh ſquadron hav-

ing been ſcattered by baffling winds, one ſhip was in danger of being cut off, had not the Commodore bore down to ſuccour her; and, uniting his force, he reſiſted the attack of the heavy ſhips of the enemy, and the ſkill of their celebrated Commodore; who, no doubt, had reckoned upon this ſmall ſquadron as a breakfaſt to his fame. At length the Ruby of 64 guns, with the Pomona and Niger frigates, appearing in ſight, the enemy was glad to deſiſt, and was purſued by the little Engliſh ſquadron. I truſt this circumſtance is no proof of their ſuperior naval talents. True it is, that the French Commodore was unfortunate in having this firſt eſſay of his abilities tried againſt an officer, who, with the moſt determined ſpirit, poſſeſſes a clear and ſound judgement, and is always cool and collected in the midſt of danger. It would be injuſtice, however, to deny that Monſieur La Motte Piquet has

has merit. His ſlipping his cables in Fort Royal Bay, to cover a convoy chaced by the frigates of the Britiſh fleet, was a manœuvre requiring great reſolution, and undoubtedly evinced great activity. But the talents for ſuch exploits differ as widely from thoſe which are required for well-fought battles, as patience and fortitude from petulance and wrath.

I ſhall next mention an action, the omiſſion of which would have been an act of injuſtice both to the honour of the nation, and the reputation of Captain Reynolds (now Lord Ducie); who, commanding the Jupiter of 50 guns, in the commencement of the war, fell in with the Triton, a French 64 gun ſhip, off the coaſt of Portugal. The Jupiter had in company with her a frigate of 28 guns. Captain Reynolds did not heſitate a moment to attack a force ſo ſuperior; and, after a ſevere action, unſupported by the frigate, which

had not been able to engage, obliged the enemy to ſheer off.

There were many actions fought in the laſt war, by ſmall ſhips, which evidently prove, that at no other period had Britiſh valour ſhone with greater luſtre. Among theſe, the action of the Fly ſloop of war, of 14 ſix pounders deſerves eminent notice. She was commanded by Captain Garner; who, having under his convoy a packet, on board of which were the Ducheſs of Devonſhire, her ſiſter, and other perſons of diſtinction, was chaced, on his paſſage to England, by two French cutter ſloops of war, of 20 guns each, French ſix pounders. The Britiſh Captain, inſpired with the glory of protecting his beautiful charge, brought his ſhip to, determined to try his ſtrength againſt ſo ſuperior a force. At the ſame time he directed the Captain of the packet to make the beſt of his way to the neareſt Engliſh port.

port. Soon after he was attacked by both cutters. But his officers, and every one of his ſeamen, inſpired by the ſame gallantry which actuated their commander, fought like lions. The French cutters were beat off, in repeated attacks, with conſiderable loſs; the packet arrived ſafe at Harwich, and his Majeſty's ſloop came with eclat into port. Captain Garner in conſequence of this action was promoted to the rank of Poſt Captain, and His Grace the Duke of Devonſhire preſented him with a ſervice of plate.

Captain Purvis, of His Majeſty's ſloop Duc de Chartres of 16 guns, on the coaſt of America fought a battle which deſerves to be recorded; proving eminently the ſuperior proweſs of Britiſh ſailors. After an action of an hour, he ſubdued the Aigle of 22 guns, belonging to the King of France. In this action, the Captain of the French ſhip with two officers and 12

men were killed, but the Duc de Chartres loſt not a man.

On the diſtant ſtations, it has often happened that very meritorious actions of ſmall ſhips have paſſed unnoticed. I ſhall take occaſion to relate two, which ought not to be forgotten; and as they were fought by two young Captains, theſe proofs of their bravery may be accepted as indications of what their country have to expect from them when more experienced. Captain Byron, commanding His Majeſty's ſhip Proſerpine of 28 guns, was riding at anchor in the neutral port of St. Euſtatius, with a French frigate (the Sphynx) of the ſame force. The rival commanders met on ſhore; and the French Captain, contemning the juvenile appearance of Captain Byron, intimated a ſort of defiance. Both ſhips put to ſea, and a battle enſued; but the Britiſh boy proved victorious, and carried the French veteran into St. Kitts.

On

On the Jamaica ſtation, a ſimilar action was fought by Captain Rowley, commanding the Reſource of 28 guns, who was attacked by the Unicorn * of the ſame force. The French Captain, being previouſly informed of the youth of the Engliſh commander, bore down upon him with confidence. The action was ſharp and obſtinate. Both ſhips loſt a number of men; but the French frigate was compelled to ſurrender.

We find, in the naval hiſtory of former wars, many pompous accounts of deſperate battles, when Britiſh ſhips of 50 and 60 guns conquered ſhips of the enemy of 46 and 44 guns; which prove that the French fought at that time with greater obſtinacy than they have done in the two laſt wars.

* Both the Sphynx and Unicorn had been captured from us, then carrying 20 guns each; but, as French frigates, mounted 28 guns.

In the laſt war, two ſhips of the enemy, on an improved conſtruction, as completely equipped and as perfect as men of war of their force could be, were taken, the firſt time they put to ſea, without making any reſiſtance. The Artois of 44 guns, twenty-four, eighteen, and twelve pounders, was captured by the Romney of 50 guns, off the coaſt of Portugal, ſtriking her colours as ſoon as the Britiſh ſhip came along-ſide. The Hebe, of the ſame force, was taken in a ſimilar manner, without an attempt to try her ſtrength, by the Rainbow of 44 guns, commanded by Captain Trollope.

As my object is principally to demonſtrate the erroneous aſſertion, that the French have made a more reſpectable figure as a maritime power during the laſt war, than they ever did before, I have not particularly noticed our actions with the Dutch, Spaniards, and American rebels.

bels. The action of the Dogger Bank proves that the Dutch have not degenerated in their courage. The Spaniards, when they have been met, have not given us reaſon to regard them as a formidable maritime power. One of their frigates, the Santa Ammonica of 32 guns, behaved gallantly, engaging the Pearl frigate, commanded by Captain George Montague *, for a conſiderable time before ſhe ſurrendered; but the Santa Catalina, a large Spaniſh frigate of 36 guns, was taken by the Succeſs of 32 guns, commanded by Captain Pole, having an armed ſhip in company with him, without any loſs or damage to his ſhip.

Of the inſtances where the French commanders have done their duty in the laſt war, the conduct of the Captain of the

* This officer, commanding the ſame frigate, after a gallant action alſo captured a French ſhip of equal force, called the Eſperance, on the coaſt of America.

Scipion

Scipion of 74 guns, when attacked by the London, a three-decked ſhip of 90 guns, ſhould not be forgotten. This ſhip in company with a frigate was chaced off the Weſt end of Hiſpaniola by the London, Captain Kempthorne, and Torbay of 74 guns, Captain Gideon, and was brought to action by the London. The Torbay, being a bad ſailer, was left behind in the chace. The French commander was not intimidated by the ſuperior force which threatened him, but gallantly defended himſelf; and by endeavouring to puſh athwart the hawſe of the London fell on board of her, and in that poſition maintained the fight. The London in the conflict loſt her fore yard; and at the ſame time the enemy's ſhip falling aſtern raked her, and ſhot away her tiller; ſo that ſhe became totally ungovernable, and was greatly annoyed, until ſhe could bring her broadſide again to bear; when ſhe ſilenced

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the enemy's ſhip, and it was ſuppoſed ſhe had ſtruck *, as the frigate made ſail from her. The Torbay, who had now come up, was told the enemy had ſtruck: but the French Captain finding that neither of the Engliſh ſhips approached to take poſſeſſion, hoiſted his topſails, which had been ſhot down, and made ſail. The London not having the uſe of her head-ſails, and having loſt her tiller, could not wear to follow her; and the Torbay was too bad a ſailer to come up with her before ſhe ran aſhore upon the rocks, where ſhe was loſt. There certainly cannot be too much commendation given to this gallant French officer, for his perſeverance. At the ſame time it muſt be admitted by evey ſeaman, that bad accidents frequently occur in battle, which no ſkill or courage can immediately remedy. No

* The action happened at night.

accident,

accident, for example, could have been more unfortunate, than that which happened to the London.

Of the unfortunate events at ſea during the laſt war, the moſt material was the capture of the outward bound Eaſt and Weſt India fleets under the convoy of the Ramillies, Captain Moutray, and two frigates; and this was the more unlucky, as it happened from real careleſſneſs. Had the frigates been ſtationed a-head to look out, which is a very general precaution in ſuch caſes, the combined fleets would have been diſtinctly diſcovered before night. As it was, a number of large ſhips were ſeen from the maſt-head; yet our fleet kept on its courſe, and in the morning was in the middle of the enemy. This circumſtance is the more extraordinary, as Captain Moutray was known to be a brave, able, and experienced officer. Therefore, when we reflect upon it, we

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can only ſuppoſe that the beſt men are ſometimes under inexplicable influence, which thwarts and deſtroys the force of their judgement. A very ſimilar circumſtance happened to one of the beſt and greateſt Admirals that England ever produced, Sir George Rook; who, though he cannot be accuſed of careleſſneſs, ſuffered himſelf to be deceived by falſe intelligence, and ran a fleet of merchant men of four hundred ſail, called the Smyrna convoy, into the midſt of the French fleet, when moſt of them were taken *.

Amongſt other untoward events was the capture of the Ardent † of 64 guns, commanded by Captain Boteler; who, miſtaking the combined fleets of France and Spain for an Engliſh fleet, ran into the heart of it, and was taken; and the cap-

* See Campbell's Admirals.

† This ſhip was retaken the 12th of April.

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ture of the Minerva frigate of 32 *, by the Concorde French frigate of 36 guns. Captain Stott commanded the Minerva; and, being ignorant of the rupture which had broken out between France and Great Britain, was furprifed on the Jamaica ſtation by the French frigate. However blameable he might be, even in time of peace, not to have his ſhip ready for battle, it is well known that many ſhips have often been in the ſame unprepared condition. Certain it is, that the Minerva was in a ſtate of defence-leſs ſecurity. She had not powder filled for an action, and her powder-horns were empty. The ſhip was not barricaded, and the people were in crouds upon the gangway, when the French frigate poured in a broadſide upon her. In ſuch a condition, I will not venture to aſſert, that a line of battle ſhip

* Retaken by the Courageux,

might

might not have been taken. It was ſo novel a thing for the French to take a Britiſh man of war, *in the two laſt wars*, that it is not to be wondered at, they ſhould make the moſt of theſe two laſt mentioned captures. But it will, I think, be admitted, that they had no more cauſe to be elated, than the Indian who had caught a lion in a trap, or transfixed him with his dart when aſleep.

I now proceed to an enterprize, which of itſelf is ſufficient to ſink the naval character of our great rival into eternal diſgrace, whilſt it raiſes the maritime fame of Great Britain to the ſummit of glory. I mean the relief of Gibraltar. It is well known, that the grand object of Spain was the reduction of this important fortreſs. Every contrivance by land and ſea; the whole art of war was exhibited; large ſhips were converted into floating batteries, impenetrable to ſhot and ſhells,

in order to ſubdue the brave garriſon. France co-operated both by land and ſea, and become ſo ſanguine in her expectations, that her princes of the blood were ſent to ſhare the glory of the conqueſt. Their hopes were principally cheriſhed, from the confidence they had in their floating batteries. Theſe, however, were blaſted in one day, ſet fire to, and burnt with red-hot ſhot from the garriſon. But, notwithſtanding the garriſon had proved itſelf invincible againſt all the contrivances of engineers, it was ſtill in danger from its exhauſted ſtate, and by being blocked up by a fleet of 44 ſail of the line, when it was known that Great Britain could not aſſemble above 34 ſail. It would have been regarded, perhaps, as madneſs and preſumption in any other nation, under ſuch circumſtances, to have attempted its relief. Yet, there remained a confident ſpirit in the Britiſh Government at this period,

that

that declared openly its intention of relieving Gibraltar; with 34 fail to force a paſſage through the combined fleets of France and Spain (as it was natural to ſuppoſe the enemy would have formed a barrier before the entrance of the Straits), to ſuccour the garriſon; and accordingly Lord Howe was diſpatched on this ſervice.

The fate of Gibraltar now depended on a battle at ſea. All that had been attempted from the ſkill, bravery and perſeverance of immenſe armies, at an enormous expence, was at ſtake, to be determined perhaps in a few hours. With ſuch mighty ſuperiority, with a certainty of conqueſt and glory if the Britiſh fleet ſhould be beaten, let us ſee what the combined fleets of Their Moſt Chriſtian and Catholic Majeſties performed. Nothing! The ſimple relation of the fact is ſufficient; the Britiſh Admiral, undaunted by their ſuperior numbers, conducted his fleet to

Gibraltar, and relieved the garriſon, in the face of the enemy, with as little annoyance as if their ſhips had been row gallies.

It is true, they afterwards followed the Britiſh fleet through the Straits of Gibraltar, and fired a few random ſhot, which had the appearance of anger, but without further meaning.

I come now to the relation of an action, which, though of ſmaller magnitude, and amongſt the laſt during the war, I am ſure the reader will not be leaſt enamoured of, and which alone is ſufficient to prove that there exiſted in the Britiſh Navy a ſpirit as daring as any it ever exhibited. At the ſame time it will demonſtrate, that at no period whatever has our enemy been more panic-ſtruck by Britiſh valour. I mean the action of the Mediator of 44 guns, commanded by the Hon. James Luttrell, with a fleet of French armed ſhips, completely equipped and well manned,

ned, carrying together upwards of 100 guns; one of them very large, had all the appearance of a 64 gun ſhip, having two tiers of ports. This little ſquadron, upon the approach of the Mediator, drew up in a line; and the Britiſh Captain inſtantly determined to attack. His judgement perſuaded him the enemy's ſhips were not men of war, by putting themſelves in a poſture of defence. His ſhip was a faſt ſailer; and, with the mind of a hero, he was tempted to try their ſtrength. The boldneſs and impetuoſity of the attack, at once confounded and threw the enemy into confuſion. Their line broke, and each ſhip fled with all the ſail ſhe could crowd. One of their ſmalleſt ſhips ſtruck firſt, afterwards the Commodore was compelled to ſurrender; and it ſhould not be forgotten, that the Mediator on this occaſion loſt only one man. If the ſpirit of envy, which has endeavoured to

diminiſh the merits of every action in the laſt war, ſhould remark, that theſe were a fleet only of armed ſhips; let it be remembered, that the moſt obſtinate battle fought in the former war, was by a ſhip of this deſcription*, which was ſubdued only by a perſevering and determined bravery in the Britiſh Captain, that had been ſeldom equalled, never ſurpaſſed.

Perſuaded, that France has at no period given ſuch ſlender proofs of ability to cope with us, as in the laſt war, and that her ſailors (whether employed in their ſhips of war, or in their armed ſhips) have never been ſo eaſily vanquiſhed, I ſhall mention an inſtance of intrepidity and enterpriſe, exhibited in the conduct of the commander of a Britiſh private ſhip of war, ſomething ſimilar to the achievement of Captain Luttrell.—Captain Moore, com-

* See Campbell's Admirals, Vol. IV. p. 186—the action of the Minerva with the Warwick.

manding

manding the Fame privateer (of 22 guns, ſix pounders, and 120 men), cruiſing in the Mediterranean, on the 18th of November, 1781, fell in with five ſail of armed merchant ſhips. Two of them carried 18 guns, nine pounders; the other three mounted 16 and 12 guns each, and all were well manned.—Captain Moore, undiſmayed by their numbers, attacked them without heſitation; and, by his addreſs and bravery, after an obſtinate conteſt, defeated them, and captured the two largeſt; the Marianne Olympe from Marſeilles, and the Activité, both bound to the Weſt Indies.

Having thus as briefly as poſſible remarked upon the moſt material actions of the laſt war (though there are many others which happened on diſtant ſtations, and in ſmall ſhips, that are worthy of being recorded), I ſhall be amply ſatisfied, if, by faithfully relating what has come to my

knowledge, or paſſed under my notice, and comparing the actions of the laſt war, and the circumſtances attending them, with the battles we have fought with France upon the ſeas in former wars, as they are related by our hiſtorians, I have furniſhed materials, not only to correct the miſtaken opinion, that the Britiſh naval character is degenerated, but to prove that the laſt war at ſea was the moſt glorious of any that Great Britain was ever engaged in. True, it has been called unfortunate; and nothing undoubtedly can be more calamitous, than for a nation to have the whole world leagued againſt her. But if the hiſtory of the laſt war ſhould be ever read, at as great a diſtance of time as we are now from the periods when Rome was in the zenith of her glory, I will venture to foretel, that the warlike genius of Great Britain will be regarded with an infinitely greater degree of admiration and aſtoniſhment.

ment. If we conſult the map of the world, and behold the inſignificant appearance of Great Britain, compared to the immenſe tracts and regions of the earth with whoſe inhabitants ſhe contended, it ſeems indeed a ſpecies of preſumption to ſay we were unfortunate. At this inſtant we not only exiſt as an independent kingdom, but are beyond example, by the wiſdom of a virtuous miniſter, flouriſhing in our commerce, reſpected in our politics, and dreaded at ſea.

In the laſt war, conſidering the effects of the Armed Neutrality, we may aſſert, that all Europe was againſt us, with the whole civiliſed continent of America. In the Eaſt Indies we were contending with, defending, or holding tributary, the princes of a mighty empire, the hiſtory of whoſe former exploits we have read with admiration. Notwithſtanding this, faſhionable politicians have proclaimed to the world,

that the nation is at the mercy of our enemies, from the degenerated ſtate of our navy!

If it be true that the navy is in ſuch a deplorable ſtate, from what cauſe has it been able to contend with, and conquer, the great maritime powers of Europe united, without loſing a ſingle line of battle ſhip? We find, in the naval hiſtory of England, at *theſe glorious periods* which are held up as examples to our modern naval heroes, when the naval diſcipline *ſhone with ſuch reſplendent luſtre*, it often happened, that we were not able to cope with any *one* of the great maritime powers; that ſometimes, in alliance with Holland, we were worſted; and had our ſhips taken and deſtroyed by France alone; that we have ſometimes aſked aſſiſtance from France to fight the fleets of Holland; that the latter alone diſputed with us the ſovereignty of the ſeas, followed our men

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of war into their harbours, and burnt our ſhips in the river Thames and Medway.—But in the laſt war, we not only contended with France, Spain, and Holland, aided and abetted by the Armed Neutrality, but were engaged in a civil war with our colonies, which not only deprived us of a number of our ſeamen, but diverted them to fight againſt us. Add to this, a divided cabinet and people at home. When all theſe circumſtances are conſidered, it becomes a caſe of common ſenſe to believe, that the gloomy apprehenſions ſo induſtriouſly propagated reſpecting the glory of Great Britain, proceed either from ignorance or faction. Great Britain will never, it is to be preſumed, have ſo many enemies or ſo many difficulties to encounter, as ſhe experienced in the laſt war. Then, indeed, it appeared as if the elements had joined our foes; for ſtorms and hurricanes

aſſiſted

aſſiſted them to deſtroy a navy, which by their own ſtrength alone they were unable to ſhake. All, however, proved to be vain. For Great Britain as a maritime power has proved invincible. Inſtead, therefore, of deſponding, every Briton's heart ſhould ſwell with pride, and confidently hope, that ſo long as Great Britain is true to herſelf, ſhe has nothing to dread from ambitious rivals. As a warlike nation, high as ſhe ſtands in the opinion of *foreign powers*, perhaps ſhe has not yet reached the zenith of her glory. But every thing depends upon the attention that is paid to the diſcipline and improvement of the naval ſervice. It matters not what are our mechanical improvements, or what are the ſuperior qualities of our officers and ſeamen, if they are not united, or act not together. Unanimity, which ſhould animate the whole corps, and which is capable of performing ſuch wonders, will,

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if neglected, degenerate into party ſpirit and jealouſy; to the extinction of that zeal for the honour of our country, which is invariably to be found, if uncontaminated with art or intrigue, in the hearts of our ſeamen.

Of the diſcipline of our navy during the laſt war, though it was materially hurt by party diſputes; yet, as far as reſpected the good order and improved regulations of individual ſhips, there was an attention to it, that had never before been ſeen; our ears have been dinned with the ancient diſcipline of the navy; but where is this ancient diſcipline to be found? or what are we to underſtand by it, to make it differ from the modern diſcipline? I underſtand by the word diſcipline, a ſtrict obedience to, and execution of, the laws, and inſtructions which have been framed for the better conducting, ſailing, and fighting the fleet. Theſe laws and inſtructions remain

the ſame now as formerly, with ſome additional inſtructions; the affected diſtinction therefore betwixt ancient and modern diſcipline is a term without meaning. If it is to be underſtood, that the different methods of carrying the diſcipline into practice have given riſe to the complaint, I am convinced, that what is called ancient diſcipline has nothing to boaſt of; for if we compare the paſt practices and methods, as they have been explained to us thirty years ago by the old ſeamen in the ſervice, with the preſent, we ſhall find, that in no one thing under the Britiſh Government has there been ſo much improvement as in the art of fighting, ſailing, and navigating a Britiſh ſhip of war. The old method of enforcing diſcipline, was without method, by main ſtrength, and the frequent uſe of the rattan; without which, no officer, from the Captain down to the youngeſt Midſhipman, ever went upon deck.

deck. Even twenty years ago there was much of this ſort of diſcipline (if it can be called by that name) remaining in the ſervice.

Laſt war, there is no doubt that the internal diſcipline of His Majeſty's ſhips was in general brought to as great a degree of perfection, almoſt, as it is capable of receiving; I ſay, in general. There were indeed exceptions; but in Captains bigotted to old cuſtoms, and whoſe ſhips might always be diſtinguiſhed by their awkwardneſs and inactivity, and the indifferent figure they cut in action, though commanded with bravery. This general improvement proceeded from a method adopted in every branch of an officer's and ſailor's duty, by dividing and quartering the officers with the men, and making them reſponſible for the performance of that portion of duty allotted them, without noiſe, or the brutal method

of driving the ſailors like cattle, with ſticks. Whether it were to make or ſhorten ſail, to manœuvre the ſhip, to keep the men clean clothed, clean bedded and birthed, this method was practiſed. And beſides other advantages, we found ſo materially our account in the article of health, that in the Weſt Indies, where formerly our ſhips ſuffered ſeverely from diſeaſe, in the laſt war there was an inſtance when in 22 ſail of the line, there were not 22 men who could not come to their quarters. It was from theſe improvements in the diſcipline of the ſervice, that our ſhips were ſo much more formidable than they had ever been before. By a juſt proportion of labour falling to the lot of each man, inſtead of the management of it being entruſted to the partiality of boatſwains' mates, the men were kept in better temper; and were leſs harraſſed and fatigued in their ſpirits, as well as in their bodies. There was alſo a careful atten-

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tion to the ſick and convaleſcent, that had never before been known in the ſervice. Sour crout, the eſſence of malt, and melaſſes, greatly contributed to keep the men in health: and latterly, inſtead of rancid butter and rotten cheeſe, the men were ſerved with cocoa and ſugar *.

So much has been ſaid upon this ſubject of the diſſatisfaction of our ſeamen with the King's ſervice, that I believe many of them have been perſuaded by idle clamours to become diſſatisfied, who never had any juſt reaſon to be ſo. It has been aſſerted, that juſtice has not been done to them in their wages and prize money. That they have been deceived in their expectations of prize money,

* The ſeamen in the Weſt Indies were obliged to Sir Samuel Hood for this ſalutary change in their diet; he obtained the ſanction of the Admiralty, that they ſhould be ſerved with as much cocoa and ſugar as could be purchaſed for the price of their allowance of butter and cheeſe, and which was indeed more than ſufficient.

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there is no doubt; and that the riches which had been promiſed to them in their Sovereign's proclamation, as a reward for their toils, their exertions, and their bravery, has been ſhared in the Courts of Law. But if they have experienced any difficulty in obtaining their wages, I am inclined to believe that it did not proceed from neglect, or inattention of the Admiralty, or any office or officers. The ſervice laſt war frequently required, that men ſhould be turned over from one ſhip to another. This was unavoidable; and it was a hardſhip, that the ſeamen often ſailed before the forms of office could be gone through, to enable them to receive their wages. This proceeded from the neceſſity of ſending our ſhips to ſea, and private convenience yielded to public good. Surrounded by enemies, all the ſeamen we could muſter were ſcarcely equal to the nation's defence. Theſe no ſooner returned from an attack

attack in one ſhip, then they were put on board another ready for ſea, and were deprived of that repoſe and recreation which they had experienced in former wars. This hardſhip was indeed to be lamented; for ſuch are the fatigues of the ſea ſervice, that it would prove abſolutely intolerable, if there were not periods of relaxation and repoſe. The Britiſh ſailor ſhould ſometimes enjoy the ſociety of his miſtreſs, and be permitted to drink his ſkin full of liquor, and there is no ſervice afterwards that he will not cheerfully undertake. But, if he is never to hope for indulgence, you may compel him to tug at the oar like a galley ſlave, but you will deſtroy the energy of his health and ſpirits. Let it be remembered, that in all former wars, ſhips were frequently docked, the ſeamen were in port for a month or ſix weeks at a time; and, having ſpent their wages or prize money, grew impatient to return in queſt of the enemy. In the laſt war, when it

was the practice to copper ſhips, they were ſcarcely ever in port, and the crews had not thoſe indulgencies which are abſolutely neceſſary to gratify and inſpirit them. This hardſhip, it cannot be denied, was diſcouraging and tireſome to many; but in other reſpects, from the good treatment, the care taken of them, the mode and practice of carrying on duty, the ſeamen on board His Majeſty's ſhips had never ſo much cauſe to be ſatisfied.

Much has been ſaid of the mutiny which prevailed in the Channel fleet, upon ordering the ſhips to be paid off at the different ports at the end of the war, the ſeamen inſiſting, at the inſtigation of their landlords, to be paid off at the ports of Portſmouth and Plymouth, where their ſhips then were. But I cannot conceive that there is any occaſion to conſider this event with much ſerioufneſs. Seamen will always become their own maſters whenever they are permitted: and that they

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were permitted, virtually, there is no doubt; for the firſt proper attempt made to bring them back to their duty, ſucceeded. Seeing their Captain * determined to recover the diſcipline of the ſhip, they yielded without an effort. This proves, that they had no diſguſt at the ſervice, or reſentment to their officers, as has been falſely ſuppoſed. Had this been the caſe, the moſt dreadful conſequences would have enſued: but there was not an officer in any of the ſhips where the mutiny moſt prevailed that was treated with diſreſpect. Merely ſtimulated by their landlords, they endeavoured to carry their point; more to gratify the wiſhes of theſe their miſchievous creditors, than to anſwer any bad purpoſe of their own hearts. But to proceed with my remarks on the improvements in his Majeſty's navy during the laſt war.

In naval evolutions, in the art of com-

* Lord Hervey, Captain of the Raiſonnable.

bining the force of ſhips of war, of changing poſitions, ſo as to put a fleet in the beſt ſhape for attack or defence; of ſailing a large fleet by diviſions, without danger to the ſhips of running on board each other in their various manœuvres, and by which means a line of battle might be formed with the greater facility; the laſt was the only war in which we had ever any real knowledge. Yet very good old officers have reprobated the art of manœuvring a fleet. "Damn your manœuvres!" cried out they, "give me every man his bird." But it is clear to common ſenſe in ſeamanſhip, that every man cannot have his bird, unleſs the Admiral who commands, has equal ſkill with the Admiral of the enemy's fleet to which he happens to be oppoſed. Admitting that our deliberate courage gives us an advantage over the French nation in battle at ſea, and that we are better ſeamen; ſtill, if we are not ſkilful in the

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art of forming our fleets, thoſe qualities which Nature ſeems to have given us for the defence of our iſland, will prove uſeleſs. We have failed more than once by confiding merely in our bravery, and permitting our ſhips to attack at random. This happened on the 27th of July, and in the battle off the Grenades in the Weſt Indies; and I may add, Admiral Arbuthnot's battle off the Capes of Virginia. If the latter was not at random, it will be admitted, that if there had been as much ſkill in the management of the whole fleet, as there was bravery ſhewn in thoſe ſhips that engaged, the French ſquadron would have been captured.

The nation is indebted to the late Admiral Kempelfelt, from whoſe genius and labour the art of manœuvring a great fleet was put in practice, and brought to a degree of perfection never known before. Signals were alſo methodiſed, and were at

once rendered diſtinct, comprehenſive, and intelligent.

Lord Howe and Lord Hood have been as much indebted to their ſkill in the management of the fleets they have commanded, for the glory they have acquired, as to their intrepidity. With this knowledge, they have often braved, and foiled, a ſuperior force; profiting with dexterity of every occaſion that offered to diſtreſs the enemy.

Amidſt very great improvements in the Britiſh navy, which indeed had conduced much to our ſucceſs, it ſtill was weakened by diſadvantages and imperfections in its eſtabliſhment. Amongſt the latter, I cannot help noticing the manner in which the Marine Corps are attached to the ſervice, or perhaps with more propriety, I might ſay, detached from it.

Marines as they are ſituated will ever remain diſſatisfied with the naval ſervice, and, being ſo, will break in upon that harmony

harmony which is ſo eſſential to good order and diſcipline, unleſs ſome alteration be made in their eſtabliſhment, to render them of more uſe when embarked. Senſible of their little conſequence at ſea, and that they are regarded merely as idlers, their pride as men is often wounded; they of courſe become captious, and ſuſceptible to the ſlighteſt inattention. It is not the men that are to blame, it is the ſervice; for the caſe would be the ſame, if the Navy Officers were Marines, and the Marines Navy Officers. As it is, there are conſtant heart-burnings. If you dine at the Ward-room table of a man of war, you hear the Marine Corps deſcribed as uſeleſs paſſengers; and if you dine with the Marine Corps at their Barracks, you will be entertained with a deſcription of the Officers of the Navy, not calculated to exalt them in the opinion of the world. All this is the effect of certain cauſes. It

is human nature, which is ſeldom patient when diſregarded.

In the corps of Marines there are perhaps as many worthy, amiable men, as many men who are ambitious, and who pant after honourable fame *, as in any other corps. How mortifying muſt it be for ſuch characters, to ſee themſelves conſidered as mere cyphers! It matters not how gallant a Captain of Marines may be in battle; his name is not known. He ſtands upon the poop to be ſhot at; but cannot receive that fame which his feelings tell him he would acquire, were he placed in a reſponſible ſituation, or could he look up to ſuch a one.

Is there no way to remedy this defect? Is there no method to be deviſed, whereby the corps of Marines might in future

* Whenever the Marines have ſerved as troops on ſhore, they have proved themſelves, by their bravery and their diſcipline, as ambitious to diſtinguiſh themſelves as the moſt renowned regiments.

be

be incorporated with the Navy? I ſhould think this purpoſe would be in ſome reſpect anſwered, if they could become uſeful in the art of ſailing and navigating His Majeſty's ſhips. The outline of my plan is, that when a Midſhipman had ſerved his time, he ſhould be permitted (if he had not intereſt to obtain a commiſſion as a Lieutenant in the Navy) to ſerve as a Lieutenant of Marines, and to return to the Navy whenever, from his merit or intereſt, he is able to obtain a commiſſion: his duty ſhould be, to aſſiſt the Lieutenant of the watch as a ſeaman. In the ſame way, when Lieutenant of a ſhip, if he has not immediate intereſt to obtain a command, he may be appointed Captain of Marines; and his duty ſhould be, when all hands are upon deck, to aſſiſt in the buſineſs of the ſhip. He ſhould alſo be promoted to the command of one of His Majeſty's ſhips, whenever from his merit or his intereſt he

becomes

becomes entitled. But ſo long as he remains Captain of Marines, it would be neceſſary that the command of the ſhip ſhould devolve on him after the junior Lieutenant; and the Marine uniform ſhould be blue.

If ſome plan of this kind, properly digeſted, were adopted, the purpoſe would not only be anſwered, but in a few years it would be a great acceſſion of ſtrength, inaſmuch as it would add as many Officers ſeamen to the ſervice as there are Marine Officers. And they would no longer be accuſed of being idlers, of fomenting diſputes, of creating diviſion in His Majeſty's ſhips, or of diſturbing the Lieutenants who have the watch of the deck, with the rattling of backgammon, or the ſcraping upon the violin. Their employment and fatigues being the ſame, they would ſleep at the ſame hours; and the ſervice would be much ſtrengthened by ſuch unity.

Amongſt

Amongſt the diſadvantages under which the naval ſervice laboured in the laſt war, one (and by no means the leaſt) was, having a number of young and inexperienced officers. In the Weſt Indies, where ſo many battles were fought, in ten ſail of the line there have not been ten Lieutenants who had ſerved out their time. This, however, did not happen from any preference given to high birth or intereſt; but there were not Midſhipmen to be found who had ſerved their whole time, This misfortune, for a real misfortune it certainly was, aroſe from a neglect in this branch of the ſervice during the peace, the moſt ill-judged œconomy that ever was thought of. Inſtead of retaining in guardſhips the complement of Midſhipmen, upwards of an hundred, moſt of them experienced and able ſeamen, were diſcharged at one time. Many obtained commiſſions in the Marines; and

others

others diſguſted with the ſervice, quitted it for ever. The want of experienced Lieutenants and Midſhipmen was ſo ſeverely felt, in the laſt war, by many Admirals and Captains who are now in power, or have influence, that no doubt the wiſeſt methods will be adopted to encourage, and attach to the ſervice, a ſufficient number who may have knowledge enough to be entruſted with the charge of a line of battle ſhip, in their watch, after they become Lieutenants. When we conſider the importance of this object, we cannot too much reprobate that meaſure, which has driven from the naval ſervice officers of this deſcription *.

I humbly preſume, that not only the guardſhips ſhould bear their full complement, but whenever any young men are

* An alteration, it is ſaid, has taken place to enlarge the complement of Midſhipmen ſince this pamphlet was firſt printed.

out

out of employ, they ſhould be received on board until they can find employment.

The cruiſing ſhips, and thoſe which are ſtationed abroad, ſhould bear an additional number; and to thoſe who ſerve in merchant ſhips ſuitable gratifications ſhould be held out, in order to bring them back to the ſervice when there might be occaſion for them. Perhaps too much encouragement could not be given to young gentlement who are deſtined for the navy, to ſerve a part of their time in the merchant ſervice. They thereby not only become good ſeamen*, but they are ſo often

* There is a ſort of doctrine which I truſt will never gain credit in the ſervice, and which cannot be too much reprobated. That it is poſſible to be a good Officer, without being a good Seaman. I believe it to be generally favoured by thoſe Officers who come too late into the ſervice to be initiated into a Seaman's duty. Wiſhing at once to become Officers, they were perhaps placed to command, inſtead of being placed in the tops to be taught a Sailor's duty.

often expoſed to difficulty and danger, and ſo enured to hardſhip, that their hearts become

To ſay, that it is poſſible for a man to be a good Officer without being a Seaman, is an aſſertion that no man who calls himſelf an Officer can maintain, and which every Seaman will call abſurd. It may, with equal truth, be ſaid, That an Officer may at once be a good Farmer; when to his coſt he would ſoon find, that being ignorant in the myſtery and labour of huſbandry, he would be deceived by every perſon he employed; as that Officer will moſt aſſuredly be, and with a riſque to his reputation, who has not the knowledge of a Seaman, and who is obliged to truſt to his Boatſwain, ſhould his ſhip be diſaſtered either in bad weather or in battle. It is well known, that when there has been an exertion from the Captain's own knowledge as a Seaman, lower maſts have been got in and rigged, topmaſts have been got up after being carried away, in a fourth part of the time that the ſame duty has been performed when entruſted to officers whoſe abilities, whether good or bad, the Captain has not been a judge of. There is a confidence alſo which the men have in their Commander, when they find he is a Seaman: the duty is carried on with a ſteady cheerfulneſs, becauſe they know that he is a competent judge of all that can be expected in the performance of their duty. How often has it happened, that a ſet of top-men have been flogged round, becauſe the topgallant yard has not been got across ſo

ſoon

become ſteeled to the hazards of war. It may indeed be a difficult matter to perſuade young men, that, to become eminent in their profeſſion, it is abſolutely neceſſary they ſhould almoſt inceſſantly labour to acquire knowledge; and that it is from being expoſed to danger, and conquering difficulties, which vary every voyage, that he can acquire experience. But the illuſtrious example of the Duke of Clarence, ſurpaſſes every thing that can be ſaid on this ſubject. Senſible that he could become maſter of his profeſſion, and equal to the command for which he is deſtined, only by unwearied application, His Royal

ſoon as another ſhip's! though there has been the utmoſt alacrity ſhewn by theſe people, and perhaps from their over eagerneſs the miſtake has happened. But the Captain being a lubber himſelf, and having never rigged a yard arm, calls his zealous Sailors lubbers (who have as much pride for the ſhip he commands as himſelf), and flogs them at a venture for not doing what he is not a judge of, and which often does not depend upon their beſt exertions.

Highneſs

Highneſs is indefatigable in attention to his duty. Diſdaining the indulgence natural to his birth, he has always ſhared the riſques, the watchings and toils of a ſeaman. In the moſt inclement ſeaſons, in dark and ſtormy nights, he has gone aloft to hand or to reef the topſails. He was reputed the beſt Midſhipman in the ſhip in which he ſerved. And when a Lieutenant, his Captain declared, cruiſing in a dangerous navigation in the Channel of England in the winter ſeaſon, that he was relieved from all anxiety when His Royal Highneſs had the watch upon deck. Placed in the reſponſibility of command on a diſtant ſtation, we ſee him in the ſame ſteady purſuit. With every pleaſure to allure him, the only object that could captivate or fix His Royal Highneſs with any degree of conſtancy, was the frigate he commanded. Should the Duke of Clarence ſtill engage our admi-

ration,

ration, by perſevering in his duty, the ſervice may experience the happieſt effects in having ſo exalted and ſo exemplary a pattern. It may, with great truth, be affirmed, that His Royal Highneſs is not only the firſt Prince of the Blood who has been regularly bred to the ſea, but that ſcarcely any young man of high birth has been ſo ſtrictly brought up, or has acquired ſo much real knowledge in the profeſſion. From ſuch well-grounded qualifications, with the inherent perſonal bravery of his auguſt family, may not the nation expect, when His Royal Highneſs ſhall animate the Britiſh fleet with his flag as Commander in Chief, that his known judgement as a Seaman and an Officer will inſpire every heart with confidence?

* * * *

It will appear, I truſt, from this ſhort review of the naval tranſactions of the laſt

war, that the notion, which too generally prevailed, of the French having given greater inſtances of maritime ſkill and bravery, than they had ever done in any former war, is entirely without foundation.

If the exhauſted ſtate of our finances would not permit us to continue the war when the Britiſh flag began to be triumphant, it was a misfortune which cannot be too much lamented. For it may be preſumed, that our fleets, re-animated by the victory of the 12th of April, whilſt the enemy had become cautious and diſpirited, would ſoon have produced a ſeries of ſucceſs, to have reduced France to a ſituation ſimilar to what ſhe experienced at the concluſion of the war 1756.

In the report I have made of thoſe Officers who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the ſervice of their country; I have written, to the beſt of my judgement, with-

out prejudice or partiality, being actuated by no other motive than that of rendering juſtice to merit. This, indeed, may be a bold undertaking in times like the preſent, when truth is made a jeſt of, when the principles of honour are ſacrificed to anſwer the purpoſes of party, and unprincipled men exult in the miſchief.

As my name is unknown to every perſon mentioned in this little work, I truſt I ſhall not be ſuſpected of adulation; and I ſhall bear, without repining, the animadverſions of thoſe gentlemen, who have not a reliſh for any thing that comes not fabricated from the mint of calumny.

THE END.

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